



ANCIENT GODLY MONARCH

BOOK 02

Jing Wu Hen

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Ancient Godly Monarch

(太古神王)

by

Jing Wu Hen

(净无痕)

Synopsis

Within the Province of the Nine Skies, far above the heavens, there exists nine galaxies of astral rivers. Each of these astral rivers is made up of the combination of countless constellations interwoven together. These nine galaxies can also be collectively known as the Nine Layers of Heaven.

Legend has it that the strongest cultivators in the Province of the Nine Skies were beings that could open an astral gate every time they advanced into a new realm. Their talent in cultivation was such that they could even establish innate links with constellations that existed on a higher layer than the Nine Layers of Heaven, eventually transforming into the heaven-defying and earth-shattering powers known as the War Gods within the Nine Layers of Heaven.

Qin Wentian is the MC of this story. How can a guy, who has a broken set of meridians, successfully cultivate? There are countless Stellar Martial Cultivators, the same as there are countless constellations within the vast starry skies. Yet, what he wants to be, is the brightest constellation of all, the one which shines the most dazzlingly within the vast and starry skies.

Copyright © 2016 by Lisa Hayes

First Edition: October 2016

All rights reserved.

English Translation by kurodreamer @ [Gravity Tales](#)

Translation Edit by Milkbiscuit @ [Gravity Tales](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

AGM 101 – A Promise

As the crowd personally witnessed Qin Wentian passing that painting to Mu Rou, they couldn't help but to silently sigh in their hearts. This fellow was actually willing to give the painting away. They couldn't help but to be jealous of Mu Rou.

Naturally, this proved that what he said earlier was true. This Divine Inscription painting was something he really created. If not, why would he be willing to give it away as a present.

“A good lass was born to the Mu Clan.” An elderly figure smiled to Mu Rou. Upon noticing this figure, Mu Rou involuntarily felt her heart trembled with shock. This person had an extraordinary status in the Royal Capital.

Not only him, several of those who came today hailed from prestigious backgrounds. There were even quite a few 3rd level Divine Inscriptionists mixed in the crowd.

“Haha, lass from the Mu Clan. Not bad.” Another figure laughed. Mu Rou slightly bowed to all those who spoke, indicating her respect.

Suddenly, Mu Rou had become the focus of everyone's attention, causing her to be slightly overwhelmed from all the attention.

“Mu Rou, as for this painting, why don't you sell it to me?”

That ordinary-looking old man clad in simple robes spoke out once again. The volume of his voice wasn't great but as the sound of his voice rang out, it seemed to possess a mystical element to it suppressed the other noises in the hall.

Mu Rou glanced over and upon noting the attitude of the surrounding weaponsmiths toward that old man, she guessed other than having an extraordinary background, he also must be someone highly respected. Involuntarily, she cast a look towards Qin Wentian.

“Little lass, you should understand the logic of holding onto this painting. Even the Elders from your academy all have their hearts filled with greed, not to mention others. If this painting remains in your possession, I'm afraid that it will only bring you endless troubles.” That old man continued.

Although his words were unpleasant to hear, Mu Rou understood that it was true. That Elder from the Royal Academy had an ugly looking expression displayed on his countenance. Today, all of his face had been thrown away.

Mu Rou was silent for a moment. This gift was something Qin Wentian had given to her for her birthday. It wouldn't be too good if she exchanged the painting for wealth. But since keeping it with her was not an option either, what should she do?

Not to mention these random people. Her clan would also undoubtedly command her to turn the painting over. If that was the case, how could she disobey?

Qin Wentian slightly nodded his head in response to Mu Rou's silent inquiry.

Qin Wentian had experienced it deeply with regards to the treachery humans were capable of. If this painting had not been made known to the public, there wouldn't be any problem at all. But now that it managed to even create such waves of commotion, if this gift of his still remained in Mu Rou's possession, it would undoubtedly be a disaster and not a fortune.

Mu Rou understood the intent of Qin Wentian, as she replied. "This gift has an extraordinary value in my heart. What would senior use in exchange if I'm willing to sell it?"

That old man glanced at Mu Rou, and he replied after a moment of silence. "A promise from me. I promise to accomplish a task for you, regardless of what it is."

If this sentence had been spoken by someone else, the crowd would doubtlessly jeer the speaker in ridicule. However, when the old man spoke these words, silence descended in the gallery. Especially for those who knew the identity of that old man, their hearts were involuntary trembling.

Sometimes, even riches wouldn't be able to secure a promise. Especially a promise from that old man.

At this moment, there wasn't anyone who dared to stand out and vie for the painting with that old man.

Mu Rou's countenance froze as she hesitated, only to hear a voice drifted over from her back. "Mu Rou, agreed to his terms."

The owner of this voice appeared by the side of Mu Rou. And as she saw the figure, she couldn't help but reveal an expression of shock.

"Father."

"Hmm." Mu Rou's father nodded his head. "Agree to him."

"Okay." Noting the solemn expression on her father's face, Mu Rou shifted her gaze towards that old man. "Senior, I agree."

The old man lightly nodded as he stated. "Your clan members should know where to find me."

"Right." Mu Rou walked forwards and handed the painting to the old man.

After receiving the painting, the old man glanced at Qin Wentian as a smile could be seen on his visage.

"The younger generations are fearsome indeed. Little fellow, continue working hard. Your future is boundless. When you have time to spare, you are always welcome to look for this old man for a chat."

That old man nodded to Qin Wentian before departing.

However, his parting words caused an uproar among the remaining crowd.

The first half of his words praised Qin Wentian. The latter half meant that Qin Wentian was welcome to meet with him anytime he wished.

The spectators were all clear on what the words indicated. One must know that among the crowd, there were even some 3rd level Divine Inscriptionists who wouldn't be able to have a chance to meet with the old man, even if they begged for it.

But before that old man left, he actually said that if there was time, Qin Wentian would be welcome to meet with him for a chat!

Other than immense shock in their hearts, many people also felt pity. That heaven-defying creation, there wouldn't be any chance for them to view it in the future.

Unless...Qin Wentian created a similar painting once more.

"Mu Rou, you had it rough during this period of time. Come home with me after this, okay?" Mu Rou's father told Mu Rou.

Glancing at her father, Mu Rou felt some unwillingness in her heart.

“Don’t worry. As for the cultivation resources the clan withheld from you, you will be duly compensated for all of them.” Mu Rou’s father gently smiled. Mu Rou froze. Was this all because of the promise of that old man? If that was the case, wouldn’t that be because of Qin Wentian?

“Okay.” Glancing at Qin Wentian, she added. “I will return first.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian smiled.

Mu Rou’s father also smiled in response and nodded lightly to Qin Wentian before departing the hall with Mu Rou.

At this moment, Qin Wentian also prepared to leave. Although there were many people here, they didn’t welcome his presence.

However, before he departed, Qin Wentian shifted his gaze to that Elder from before. He calmly stated.

“I have a question for you. Are all the Elders in the Royal Academy as shameless as you?”

After completing that sentence, Qin Wentian walked away. His parting words were targeted at that Elder’s humiliating words from before. Are all the students of the Emperor Star Academy as shameless as you?

The humiliating tone of that sentence included the entirety of the Emperor Star Academy. Qin Wentian would naturally remember it.

The parting words he left behind at this moment were akin to a loud slap on the face of that Elder.

Not long ago, when Qin Wentian stated that the Divine Inscription painting was his, many tried to make things difficult for him, jeering at him with ridicule and even humiliating him.

The best reply to answer these types of people was to slap their faces with reality.

As Qin Wentian walked towards the exit, the crowd automatically opened up a path for him. Many of those with extraordinary statuses started to surround him, wanting to have a chance to chat with him.

Naturally, among them were several weaponsmiths who had met a bottleneck with regards to their comprehension of Divine Imprints. If they could forge a friendship and have future interactions with the youth who created that heaven-defying Divine Imprint, it would undoubtedly be of immense help to them in the future.

The 'clown' from earlier had somehow obtained such an important status. Even if it wasn't for his talent in inscriptions, just merely his talent for cultivation alone would already be sufficient enough to cause others to respect him.

Ye Zhan and Liu Yan were standing together. Both of them watched silently as Qin Wentian walked past them.

Qin Wentian was chatting to those around him with smiles on his face. He didn't even glance in their directions. Perhaps, they no longer had the qualification to attract Qin Wentian's attentions. The arrogance Ye Zhan had when he first arrived was now crushed into nothingness.

Especially Liu Yan. She was standing with her head lowered, not daring to make a sound. Maybe, they were truly people belonging to different worlds.

Ye Zhan's countenance was filled with anger and even some traces of regret. Previously, Qin Wentian had no interactions with him but had also never humiliated him. But because of the pride in his heart, he had chosen to offend him.

What worth did Ye Zhan have? In the Ye Clan, there were many youths who were countless times more talented than him. If not for the backing of his clan, he would be evaluated as utterly worthless. Just the hard work and talent of Qin Wentian alone had left Ye Zhan far behind in the dust.

This comparison was like a knife that mercilessly stabbed at his heart. However, Ye Zhan forcefully suppressed the emotions of self pity deep within himself.

In reality, Qin Wentian had never even bothered to compare himself with him, because in Qin Wentian's eyes, Ye Zhan was

never someone important.

Other than Ye Zhan, Murin and Gretchen were also feeling this way.

She had once nothing but contempt towards Qin Wentian. But after today, she realized that her talent that she was so proud of was nothing but garbage in front of him. Be it combat ability or talent in comprehending inscriptions, Qin Wentian effortlessly smashed her down.

The representatives of the Sky Transport Network silently left as well, while Xue Yuan stood there mutely, not even daring to make a sound.

The Elder from the Royal Academy glared at her as he angrily berated, "Look at what you have done."

At this moment, the Elder really wanted to unleash all the humiliation and rage he felt today on Xue Yuan.

Xue Yuan lowered her head in silence. Although she was wrong on her part, the Elder had no rights to criticise her like this.

Using his status as an Elder of the academy to borrow the painting from her, how could she have dared to disagree? And as for the events that transpired later, weren't they all caused by his arrogance and individual decisions? It had nothing to do with her whatsoever.

Mu Rou could criticise her all she wanted, but this Elder did not have the rights to do so.

However, this world never runned on logic. Facing the Elder's harsh beratement, as an ordinary student of the Royal Academy, she could only silently bear with it. Was this not also a form of tragedy?

AGM 102 – Gongyang Hong

Qin Wentian walked towards the exit as Little Rascal strolled leisurely behind him. At the same time, several figures were crowding around Qin Wentian, and the one nearest to him was none other than the guest weaponsmith from the Divine Weapon Pavilion, Lu Feng. Since he was from the Divine Weapon Pavilion, naturally Qin Wentian felt closer to him.

“Senior Lu Feng, who was that old man from earlier?” Qin Wentian curiously inquired.

The old man looked extremely ordinary, but he actually dared to use a single promise to obtain the painting everyone was coveting. And moreover, at that time, no one even tried to vie with him. This unusual development had naturally been observed by Qin Wentian.

“Do you know about the Jun Lin Banquet?” Luo Feng asked as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Yes, it’s the most magnificent banquet that occurs during the end of every year and is held in the Chu Country.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“That’s right. In the Chu Country, the banquet is an affair of utmost importance. The talent of all the youths who join the banquet can all be discerned clearly in a single glance. Not only that, the champion of the grand banquet will have a glorious future, and many of those champions usually chose to leave the

country of Chu.”

Lu Feng slowly continued, “That old man is named Gongyang Hong. Today’s younger generations has already mostly forgotten his name. More than 30 years ago, he was the most outstanding talent among all the elites. If I remember correctly, the position of champion in the Jun Lin banquet 34 years ago was obtained by Gongyang Hong.”

Qin Wentian’s heartbeat slightly quickened. That old man was actually once the champion of a Jun Lin Banquet?

“Why does he looked so feeble and old?” Qin Wentian asked, bewildered. Cultivators were usually filled with vitality, with their blood and Qi in abundance, and would usually look a lot younger than their age. Gongyang Hong should be nearing 60, and thus his looks should be in his forties but his appearance was actually that of an old man.

“No one knows why, but Gongyang Hong was the stuff of legends. The year when he emerged as the champion, the Nine Mystical Palace wanted to recruit him in, but he actually refused.” Lu Feng, as he spoke to this point, glanced about uneasily and continued in a low voice. “Gongyang Hong was a man who valued his freedom. After he emerged as champion, he disappeared from Chu.”

“This matter by right should have already been at an end. When someone chooses to leave Chu, there would rarely still be any news regarding them. However, a few years ago, Gongyang Hong suddenly returned to Chu. Not only that, he actually became an

extraordinary top-tier weaponsmith despite not having any experiences with Divine Inscriptions when he was young. There was only a total of three times when he worked with others to forge weapons, and every time he did, the end products were all peak, 3rd level divine weapons.”

“During then, this matter also caused a huge commotion. Gongyang Hong was a legend, and not only did he have astounding accomplishments in the realm of Divine Inscriptions, his own strength, although he had never displayed it in front of others, had most certainly reached such a profound level that one could not even begin to guess at.”

Lu Feng sighed as he continued, filled with reverence towards a character such as Gongyang Hong. Qin Wentian also gradually understood why a promise from that old man was so valuable.

Mu Rou’s father immediately got her to agree. In the future, if there was any problem that the Mu Clan would be unable to resolve, Gongyang Hong’s promise could well be a path of survival for them.

“Wentian, if you have the time, you should really pay a visit to Gongyang Hong and exchange insights regarding your comprehensions towards Divine Imprints.” Lu Feng smiled. He chose to use the words ‘exchange insights’; naturally, in his heart, he had already regarded Qin Wentian extremely highly.

“Where is the residence of Senior Gongyang?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“Bamboo Lodge.” Lu Feng laughed. In the entire Chu Country, there was only one location named the Bamboo Lodge. This was the residence of Gongyang Hong and was not some well-kept secret. Those who knew of Gongyang Hong’s identity would often try their luck in the bamboo forest surrounding the lodge to meet with Gongyang Hong, but only a privileged few were qualified to meet with him.

“Could you bring me to that place?” Qin Wentian laughed, causing Lu Feng’s countenance to freeze. “You mean, you want to go there now?”

“Since I’m going to pay my respect sooner or later, why not familiarise myself with the road first?” Qin Wentian replied with a smile. Lu Feng naturally would not reject this request, and as they exited the Royal Academy, Qin Wentian bid farewell to the crowd and departed with Lu Feng.

.....

Qin Wentian’s painting caused waves of commotion in the Royal Capital and especially in the world of the weaponsmiths.

And as for weaponsmiths, they had always been talents that the Royal Capital wished to recruit. Thus, the fiasco at the Royal Academy had been closely monitored by many eyes.

No one would have been able to predict that surprising ending. Like before, Qin Wentian was in the limelight once again.

Ever since back then, when the youth stood amidst the falling snow the major powers had already been curious about Qin Wentian. And now, with regards to the mystical painting, Qin Wentian had caused such an upheaval and attracted an incomparably huge amount of attention. The various major powers all began to launch serious investigations regarding Qin Wentian.

Although Qin Wentian's profile looked simple, how in the world did he become a genius in the world of inscriptions?

What exactly was Qin Wentian's secret?

Mu Clan.

In front of a desk, an old man was reading a compiled report that had just recently arrived.

“Qin Wentian, adopted son of Qin Chuan, details are unknown regarding his actual background. Was brought to the Qin Clan by a crippled housekeeper when he was a child. At the age of 6, he was discovered to have crippled meridians. At the age of 13, his marriage engagement with Autumn Snow from the Bai Clan was set. At the age of 16, the Bai Clan annulled the engagement, Qin Wentian began to cultivate and eventually condensed an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer.

This report did not contain much detailed information. However, the points it listed were already enough to summarise Qin Wentian's entire life. His life was pretty ordinary and basically

didn't have any cause for concern until after he entered the Royal Capital.

The old man raised his pen, as he added another sentence at the end of the report. "A genius of Divine Inscriptions, able to forge 3rd level Divine Weapons. Level of comprehension: Demon grade."

After he finished writing, the old man put the pen down and realised that a servant was standing outside.

"What's the matter?" The old man asked.

"Young Miss Mu Rou has returned." The servant respectfully replied.

The old man raised his head as he looked at the servant. "Mu Rou's birthday, was it yesterday?"

"It is so." The servant nodded his head.

"Prepare a feast." The old man instructed, "Make it a big event, and get everyone in the can to celebrate it together. However, there must be a feeling of family warmth."

"Roger." The servant nodded as he bowed and retreated, beginning his preparations.

.....

In a room in the Ou Clan, there was a figure similarly standing in front of a desk, looking at the compiled report as traces of contemplation could be seen in his eyes.

This middle-aged man looked studious and elegant, akin to a simple scholar.

The name on the report he was reading was ‘Qin Wentian’ as well. Once, he had not seen the need to pay attention to this name. Now, however, he only hoped that the owner of the name would have gone to hell back then.

Although this youth from Sky Harmony City had an above-average talent, the middle-aged man had reason to believe that with Orchon and Yanaro in the Emperor Star Academy, they shouldn’t have any problems with extinguishing this genius before he fully matured.

However, this genius matured way faster than his expectations, quickly gaining the attention of the Emperor Star Academy, and now he had even obtained recognition and was protected by the will of academy.

Now, it wasn’t going to be so simple if he wanted to remove the youth

“What’s the rate of success if we hire someone to kill him?”

“100%.” Behind him stood a figure who calmly replied to the question while nodding his head to the middle-aged man. He dared to guarantee that Qin Wentian would surely become a dead man.

“What’s the probability that the Emperor Star Academy would find out?” The middle-aged man continued asking.

“If we directly assassinate him right now, about 90%” That figured replied again, extremely confident with his answer.

“Then, regarding the probability, we will wait till it becomes 10% before we make a move. Of course, it would be the best if we could get someone else to execute the deed.” The middle-aged man instructed. Naturally, he would definitely not risk himself with a probability of 90%. Wasn’t this courting death?

If it weren’t for Qin Wentian’s monstrous rate of growth, he would never have even thought of doing this. The Ye Clan should be even more anxious than him by right.

“Yes.” The figure standing behind replied.

“If we borrow the hands of others, this matter would definitely not be linked to my Ou Clan. Definitely not, there won’t even the remote probability that we will be suspected.” The middle aged man contemplated to himself as he spoke again.

No one was willing to test how deep the waters were and break the will of the Emperor Star Academy. Even the Royal Clan had to

step back to some degree and give face to the Emperor Star Academy. His Ou Clan naturally did not have the capacity to act brazenly.

However, he believed that as long as he commanded, the figure standing behind him would surely do a good job. That mysterious figure had never failed at a single task throughout many years and had always excelled outstandingly.

“The date of the Jun Lin banquet was soon arriving. Let’s hope that Orchon will be able to attain some accomplishments for the Ou Clan.”

AGM 103 – Riddle Within The Painting

In the outskirts of the Royal Capital, there was a region that was overgrown by lush green shoots of bamboo. This bamboo forest was situated right in front of a part of the Dark Forest, and was extremely peaceful and quiet.

Qin Wentian and Lu Feng arrived at this particular location, staring at the bright greenery of the bamboo forest that was filled with a sense of brimming vitality.

“We’ve arrived, however I’m unable to accompany you inside.” Lu Feng bitterly smiled. “No one would dare to barge in and enter the forest unannounced.”

Qin Wentian lightly nodded his head as he carried Little Rascal, taking a step forward as he called out. “Qin Wentian of the junior generation pays his respect to Senior Gongyang.”

“You may enter.” Within the bamboo forest, a voice drifted out. Qin Wentian only saw the bamboos in front of him seemingly come to life as they shifted their positions, opening up a path through the middle.

“I shall say my goodbyes here.” Lu Feng smiled.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian nodded as he entered the pathway, strolling through the bamboo forest.

This pathway was extremely long, and after a certain distance, Qin Wentian noticed a simple-looking lodge in front of him. It was peaceful and quiet, giving people a feeling that it was separated from the rest of the world.

“What a wondrous place.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart. As he approached, he noticed that Gongyang Hong was sitting in front of the lodge, inscribing something. In front of him, there were many scrolls of paintings that were inscribed with incredibly complicated runic outlines. It was as though all of them were Divine Imprints.

“Senior Gongyang.” Qin Wentian bowed to show his respect.

“Little fellow, you sure arrived fast. Come over here and take a look at this painting.” Gongyang Hong remarked to Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian nodded as he sat down on the seat. Gongyang Hong passed a painting over to him, causing Qin Wentian’s countenance to stiffen. The painting in front of him was actually yet another Human-type Divine Inscription painting.

“Senior, this is?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“Naturally, it’s a Divine Inscription painting as well. How long would you need to comprehend the Divine Imprints in it?” Gongyang Hong asked.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows upon hearing the words of

Gongyang Hong, as he studied the painting.

In the painting, there was an silhouette of a ravishing beauty pointing her finger forward. From it, one could sense an overwhelming pressure gushing relentlessly forth, stabbing into the eyes of the spectator.

“Buzz!” The mind of Qin Wentian shuddered violently as he involuntarily let go of the painting, his heart trembling with shock.

“I’m afraid that the Divine Imprints in the painting are of 4th level inscriptions. It’s impossible for me if I want to gain any insights regarding this in the short term.” Qin Wentian replied. “Is this painting inscribed by Senior?”

“How could I have such a high level of comprehension?” Gongyang Hong smiled as he shook his head.

“Regarding your painting, how did you successfully inscribe it?” Gongyang Hong continued.

“Under a special state of epiphany, I had wanted to transmit the energy within my body into the painting, and due to a lucky combination of various factors, I managed to succeed.” Qin Wentian respectfully replied.

“Transmit the energy within your body to inside the painting?” Gongyang Hong repeated as a bright light flickered in his calm

eyes.

“Yes, and sometimes I wonder, are Divine Imprints not the same as innate techniques? After all, they share several unique characteristics.” Qin Wentian nodded his head as he continued. However, his casual musings actually caused Gongyang Hong to abruptly tremble, as though sudden waves of realisation hit him.

“Divine Imprints, the same as innate techniques?”

Gongyang Hong’s body lightly shook as he wondered about all of the possibilities.

“Innate techniques, innate techniques.” Gongyang Hong mumbled as though he had grasped something, his gaze fixated on the Divine Inscription painting in front of Qin Wentian.

“If this painting was an innate technique, what type of innate technique would it be?” Gongyang Hong murmured, gazing at that painting blankly.

4th level Divine Inscriptions were countless times more intricate when compared to 3rd level Divine Inscriptions. Qin Wentian had no way to decipher them. As he focused his attention onto the painting, he only felt an terrifying sharp, overwhelming sense of pressure gushing towards him.

Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly as he closed his eyes, activating the Dreamcast Art as he stepped into his dreamscape. An

instant later, he appeared on that patch of shore near the ocean from before.

In front of Qin Wentian, the divine inscription painting of that ravishing woman also appeared.

“Transform.” Qin Wentian’s dream will commanded, and the Divine Imprints in the 4th level painting seemingly came to life. The ravishing beauty manifested inside his dreamscape, inundating the space in front of her with her attacks.

The current Qin Wentian was still unable to decipher what types of innate techniques the 4th level divine inscription painting contained. However, in his dream, he could test his hypothesis, allowing the painting to undergo all kinds of transformations, deducing the nature of the Divine Inscription painting.

After the manifested figure underwent countless transformations, Qin Wentian discovered that if he were to regard each individual Divine Imprint inscribed upon the painting as a unique innate technique, it had an undying energy to it, as though it would never be extinguished. Every attack was as though it could continue on indefinitely.

After he exited his dreamscape, Qin Wentian saw that Gongyang Hong was still in that state of bewilderment from earlier. Abruptly, Gongyang Hong woke up and stared at Qin Wentian, stating, “Use the energy you sensed from the painting to attack me. Quickly.”

The attitude of Gongyang Hong shocked Qin Wentian a little. This Divine Inscription painting seemed to be of paramount importance to Gongyang Hong.

After which, Qin Wentian stood up and stabbed his finger in the space in front of him. The space between them continuously trembled as the finger attack landed on Gongyang Hong's body.

However, Qin Wentian felt as though he had stabbed his finger right into a wall of steel. He had no way to even move his opponent a little.

"Finger technique, staggered attacks? There's no such innate techniques. I'm sure of it." Gongyang Hong's eyes reflected a struggle.

"Senior, the technique I used was a finger-type innate technique for certain. But what I could sense was merely the tip of the iceberg. There's a possibility that this might be a spear-type technique or sword-type technique and not only so; within it, there seemed to be an inexhaustible current of energy." Qin Wentian spoke.

"Spear-type technique, sword-type technique? Inexhaustible, undying energy?" Gongyang Hong deeply immersed himself in his contemplation and after many moments, he abruptly and explosively stepped to the side, piercing out with a sword. In front of him, as his Sword Qi howled with madness, wanting to destroy everything, the wind created from the swing of the sword transformed into a raging hurricane, lacerating everything as bamboo shoots after bamboo shoots were sliced into nothingness

in front of him.

“Is it this type of innate technique?” Gongyang Hong inquired.

“Highly possible.” As Qin Wentian felt the sword intent, his heart trembled violently. The strength of Gongyang Hong had already reached such a terrifying level.

“Nine Swords of Life, this is the Nine Swords of Life.” Gongyang Hong was extremely agitated as he glanced at Qin Wentian, before rushing into his lodge in a fluster.

An instant later, Qin Wentian only saw that Gongyang Hong had retrieved three more Divine Inscription paintings as he passed them over to Qin Wentian. “Quickly, help me to take a look and tell me what they contained within.”

Gongyang Hong was an expert weaponsmith and had extremely high comprehension regarding Divine Inscriptions. But the current him seemed to be akin to a mad man. Which paintings was it that could cause Gongyang Hong to be in such a fluster?

“Right.” Qin Wentian lightly nodded as he studied the 2nd painting in his hands.

The figure in this painting extended his palms out, as similarly, a terrible, devastating energy gushed out. However, just like the earlier 4th level Divine Inscription painting, Qin Wentian couldn’t decipher anything.

Qin Wentian once again entered into his dreamscape and observed the countless transformations, then exchanged information with Gongyang Hong. However despite this, Gongyang Hong couldn't seem to find a matching innate technique for it.

“Senior, maybe you had never cultivated this innate technique before.” Qin Wentian gently stated as he looked to Gongyang Hong.

“Impossible, absolutely impossible. If what you say is true, that innate techniques are hidden within the Divine Imprint, I would know for sure. I had never cultivated the Nine Swords of Life before as well.” Gongyang Hong replied with resoluteness. According to Qin Wentian's request, Gongyang Hong executed over 100 types of innate techniques, and the whole area in front of him was decimated.

“Senior Gongyang knows too many innate techniques. Even if he has never cultivated them before, he can still instantly understand the essence and meaning of them. How terrifying.”

Qin Wentian felt immense shock in his heart. At this moment, he took another glance at the painting as he mused, “Maybe, could the innate technique contained within this painting be a technique that consists of many different transformations?”

“What did you say?” Gongyang Hong seemed to have understood something upon hearing the words of Qin Wentian.

“Senior, maybe the innate technique itself contains many different kinds of transformations?” Qin Wentian replied. Gongyang Hong drew in a huge breath as he took a step forwards, pushing his palms outwards. This time round, he didn’t do anything, but Qin Wentian had a feeling that the next strike of Gongyang Hong would contain a myriad of transformations within it.

“Yes, this was the feeling I felt.” A bright light shone in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“Formless Art.” Gongyang Hong murmured as he spoke to Qin Wentian, “Look at the next painting.”

Qin Wentian nodded. The inscriptions of the 3rd painting were beautifully and wondrous and were also exceptionally mystical. However, it didn’t seemed like an innate technique. The two of them lost themselves in discussion and even when night descended, they still had no conclusion.

Forgoing sleep, the two of them continue their analysis. And finally, Gongyang Hong made a sudden movement, without any charm or grace, and even seemed to be extremely clumsy. However, this caused the light in Qin Wentian’s eyes to brighten.

“There’s a high probability that this is it.”

“This is the beginning stance of a body movement technique. Its name is Connecting Steps and it’s comprised of many changes

within.”

Gongyang Hong mumbled as he continued, “The last painting.”

Qin Wentian nodded his head as he analysed the last painting. This painting was the only painting with a male figure in it. The figure stood in the painting unmovingly, but the eyes of it shone with an incredibly extraordinary light.

Gongyang Hong only cast a few glances at it before sighing, “The three earlier innate techniques, I’ve only understood them but did not cultivate them before. As for this final innate technique, I know what it is – Eyes of Death.

As the sound of Gongyang Hong’s voice faded away, his eyes transformed into tunnels of endless depth. Qin Wentian trembled in fear but in that same instance, Gongyang Hong’s eyes turned back to normal.

“This eye-type innate technique is one that I’m most proficient with, while the Nine Swords of Life was her favourite technique. As for the Formless Art and the Connecting Steps, I’ve also heard of them. Why did I only realised today that these four types of Divine Inscription paintings contained within them four types of innate techniques.”

Gongyang Hong drew in a deep breath as he stared at the empty space.

“Nine Swords of Life, Eyes of Death, Formless Art, Connecting Steps.” Qin Wentian mumbled, “Life and death are two independent entities. No, instead, it should be – life and death are interconnected!”

(Check TN Notes for a clearer meaning – the meaning can also be “We live and die together”)

As the low voice of Qin Wentian drifted over to Gongyang Hong’s ears, it was as though a bolt of lightning flashed past, striking right into his mind, causing him to freeze on the spot, lost in contemplation.

At this moment, Qin Wentian felt a sense of pressure. The whole space seemed to be filled with a horrible silence.

“Life and death are interconnected, HAHAHA, life and death are interconnected! Gongyang Hong, you should be cursed to live a life of eternal damnation!” Abruptly, Gongyang Hong bellowed in anger, as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. His Qi roiled chaotically and attacked his heart, as he slumped heavily onto the ground.

His eyes however, remained wide open. In the depths of his eyes, one could see utter despair, as well as boundless regret and hatred!

生息九剑、死亡之眼、无相神通、依人步：“生、死、无、依，不对，应该是，生、死、相、依！”

If translated literally =

Life Nine Swords, Death Eyes, No Form Innate Art,
Compliant/Connecting Human Step:

“Life, Death, No, Connection. No, it should be: Life, Death,
Forms, Connection!”

But despite this, “We live and die together” fits the context better. I will be using “We live and die together” in the next chapter.

AGM 104 – Heavenly Dipper

“Senior!” Qin Wentian’s heart shuddered as he called out in shock. Qin Wentian ran towards Gongyang Hong, then squatted down to check on his injuries.

Gongyang Hong waved his hands in response to Qin Wentian as he stared blankly at that vacant space. In the depths of his eyes, despair, rage, regret and pain could be seen, causing those who saw it to also be able to feel the sadness of Gongyang Hong.

“Senior, you have to take care of yourself.” Qin Wentian silently sighed upon seeing the emotions in Gongyang Hong’s eyes. Gongyang Hong definitely had an extraordinary past.

“We live and die together, we live and die together..... for over 20 years, I wanted to fully immerse myself in comprehending the insights of Divine Imprints and thus, I begun my research on Divine Inscriptions. But right from the beginning, my path was already a mistake.” Helplessness was evident in Gongyang Hong’s voice as he muttered to himself.

“If I had known that her intention was not for me to comprehend the imprints within the paintings, but instead was for me to decipher the innate techniques hidden within, I believe that at most, I would have succeeded using only half a year of time. After all, I’ve seen and knew of these techniques. Maybe I would have even succeeded using only 2 to 3 months’ worth of time... but, I actually used a total of 20 over years.”

Gongyang Hong murmured to himself, but Qin Wentian knew that he was right. If Gongyang Hong had known from the beginning that the paintings contained innate techniques within them, he would have understood the concept of the problem from this angle. Based on his knowledge and comprehension level, he would have solved the riddle within half a year. After all, he was familiar with all the four types of innate techniques, and was even capable of executing them at a certain level. However, sadly, Gongyang Hong's direction was already wrong at the start.

“I’ve always considered myself to be free-spirited, but in reality, I’m inferior, a coward, cold blooded and emotionless. I’m sorry for what I’ve done to you.” From the corner of his eye, a tear could be seen beginning to roll down Gongyang Hong’s face. Akin to a corpse, he laid there, unmoving.

There’s no greater sorrow than a heart that’s already withered. His heart, at this moment, was so cold that the coldness seeped into the bone.

And in this instant, Qin Wentian’s heart involuntarily trembled as he saw the dishevelled hair of Gongyang Hong’s head slowly turning white.

“Senior, the matter of over 20 years ago has already passed. Why must you torment yourself so?”

Qin Wentian tried to persuade. To what degree would the level of despair and agony be in order to turn a headful of hair white?

However at that moment, the headful of white hair actually turned silver, as Gongyang Hong appeared to age more than 10 years in an instant.

Gongyang Hong closed his eyes, as Qin Wentian sat beside him, not knowing what to say.

The “her” in his words should most probably be a female who left behind the words “We live and die together” to him.

However, Qin Wentian didn’t understand. Since that female was so emotional, why didn’t she just tell Gongyang Hong directly. Instead, she chose to left behind a riddle in the paintings, leaving behind more than 20 years of regret and misunderstanding.

Gongyang Hong currently had his eyes closed, and there were no signs of life visible about him. Qin Wentian sighed but chose not to disturb Gongyang Hong. He sat down at a spot nearby Gongyang Hong, opting not to leave in case Gongyang Hong suffered from any mishap.

Very quickly, another day passed and night arrived. The Astral Light cascaded downwards, landing on Qin Wentian’s body. Qin Wentian was currently cultivating in his sleep, his body was bathing in the starlight, his countenance appearing so tranquil and peaceful. The boundless energy of the Astral Light was absorbed into his body, as it circulated along his arterial circular pathways.

At this moment, Gongyang Hong opened his eyes, only to see him inclining his head to look at the vast starry skies, as a sense of lost

emanated from him.

“Everything that happened was because of my own mistakes.”
Gongyang Hong gazed at the stars as he murmured in his heart.

“That year, her talent was monstrous, and she had many suitors. Although you appeared confident and at ease, didn’t that originate from your sense of inferiority? If you didn’t think of yourself to be inferior to her, why after such a long period of companionship did you still not dare to take the final step. Couldn’t you feel the love she had towards you?

“That year, she rejected 18 marriage proposals, and those she rejected were all demon-level talents from all the grand and powerful sects. Which of them was inferior to you? Why did she still chose to reject them? Why would she still take the trouble to talk about this with you? Your self-pity and cowardice spoiled everything. In the end, you chose to remain silent, afraid to tell her of the feelings in your heart.

“That year, everyone was jealous of you. But why would they be jealous? Wasn’t it because you were the only one she was close to? And because of jealousy, they severely injured you. Because of you, she begged her father for help, but yet again, during the 19th marriage proposal, you remained silent. Could it be that you were still blind to her love for you?

“Even the last time she came to see you, you were still afraid to confess. In the end, you remained silent, the only thing she left behind were the four Divine Inscription paintings, and she still gave you a year of time to decipher the riddle. During that year of

time, even if you did not decipher it, as long as you spoke up, regardless of the cost, she would have given everything up and left together with you. All because of the words, ‘We live and die together.’

“But, you did not. You personally witnessed her marriage with some other. You indifferently watched everything happen. Couldn’t you tell what her eyes were conveying when she looked at you? That despair, and coldness and eventually hopelessness. Gongyang Hong, you deserve death.”

Gongyang Hong thought about the events of his past that occurred over 20 years ago. Even after the long passage of time, he still felt pain, as he stared blankly at the night skies, lonely and miserable.

The air of the early morning was slightly wet, dewdrops could be seen on the bamboo leaves in the bamboo forest around them.

Qin Wentian called out, “Senior.” as he opened his eyes. He saw Gongyang Hong sitting there, with a head of silvery hair, appearing to have aged immensely.

“You’re awake.” Gongyang Hong shifted his gaze over and smiled at Qin Wentian, recovering from his earlier state of madness. Qin Wentian, upon seeing this, finally heaved a sigh of relief in his heart.

“Hmm.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“How did you ever find the connection between Divine Imprints and innate techniques?” Gongyang Hong curiously inquired. The her from that year was also a monstrous genius, and was an expert in divine inscriptions, carving out the four Divine Inscription paintings for him 20 over years ago. This was proof that she was the same as Qin Wentian, and had already discovered the interconnection between Divine Imprints and innate techniques.

“Struck by a sudden inspiration. One of my cultivation techniques requires me to borrow the energy of Divine Imprints. After I gained some comprehension regarding Divine Imprints, somehow, unknowingly, I began to link both of them together.” Qin Wentian smiled as he answered.

As Gongyang Hong looked upon the pure smile displayed, he couldn't help but to think of events of yesteryear. Sadly, after living hollowly for over 20 years, the only thing he had left was regret.

“If you ever meet a girl who can move your heart, do not miss the chance, you must take the initiative.”

Gongyang Hong abruptly changed the topic, leaving Qin Wentian stunned.

Laughing simple-mindedly, Qin Wentian nodded, “Okay.”

However, as of now, he still had not met a girl who could truly move his heart. But, on the topic about moving his heart, a scene of a scenery of snow involuntarily floated up in his mind.

Snowflakes were drifting about, as a young lady sat beside him, silently admiring the snow. Calling him a dumbo, before leaving with a smile. That picture was beautiful indeed.

“What am I thinking?” Qin Wentian bitterly shook his head.

“Remember, not to miss the chance. If you do, you will regret it for life.” Gongyang Hong deeply sighed as he continued, “Since you could connect Divine Imprints and innate techniques together, why haven’t you done the same and linked your Astral Soul together with your attacking-type innate techniques?”

“Senior, the attacks executed by innate techniques, don’t they already contain a sliver of Astral Soul energy within them? The Astral Energy granted from the different types of Astral Souls would determine the cultivation art and innate techniques of a cultivator. As for a deeper linkage, this junior has yet to comprehend anything regarding that.” Qin Wentian replied.

Although he replied this way, in reality, Qin Wentian already had the thought of linking his Astral Soul with his innate techniques. Back then when he fought against Yanaro and Luo Qianqiu, he had already wanted to incorporate the power of his dream-type Astral Soul into his innate techniques.

“You should know that above the Yuanfu Realm is the Heavenly Dipper Realm. But do you know what the Heavenly Dipper Realm symbolises?” Gongyang Hong asked as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Junior has no idea.” Qin Wentian replied. Now, he was only at the Arterial Circulation Realm. How would he have had the chance to interact with a sovereign of the Heavenly Dipper Realm? Those at the Heavenly Dipper Realm could already be considered as standing at the peak in the entire Chu Country.

“Heavenly Dipper Realm, is to condense stars of the Heavenly Dipper, also known as Astral Nova. At that time your Astral Soul, would be then, your most direct method of combat. For some cases, Astral Novas were even more powerful when compared to using Divine Weapons.” Gongyang Hong explained, as he continued. “Sooner or later, the Astral Soul itself would transform into an attack-type innate technique. However, to condense Astral Novas, a cultivator would require a truly astronomical amount of cultivation resources to step past the gulf that separates Yuanfu and the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

“Many people – including numerous elites and talented geniuses – despite trying for their entire lives, weren’t able to bridge the final gap. If you could incorporate the power of your Astral Soul directly into your innate techniques earlier, when it comes to the time to condense your Astral Nova, you would find it several times easier when compared to others.”

Gongyang Hong guided as Qin Wentian seriously listened. This was the precious insight of Gongyang Hong, obtained through his own experiences.

“Look into my eyes.” Gongyang Hong continued. As Qin Wentian looked into his eyes, he only saw eyes of the dead looking back at him. Instantaneously, he felt a surge of death intent entering his

mind, only to dissipate a moment later. However, just an instant of that experience was able to cause Qin Wentian's heart to palpitate wildly.

Just a single look was already this terrifying.

“That was the combination of my Astral Soul and my ‘Eyes of the Dead’ innate technique. This type of innate technique can only be cultivated if one has a matching type of Astral Soul.” Gongyang Hong continued, “Thus, you must remember to incessantly utilise your Astral Souls. In the future, they will become your ultimate weapons, and similarly, your proficiency with usage of Astral Souls is also the key of stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm.”

“Many thanks for the guidance of Senior.” Qin Wentian bowed.

“I’m just speaking from my experiences, how can it count as guidance? If not for you, I’m afraid to say that even now, I still would not have managed to decipher the riddle in the paintings.” Gongyang Hong sighed, “Qin Wentian, your comprehension is in the right direction. Astral Souls, Divine Imprints, Innate Techniques, all of these are part of cultivation. All streams lead to the oceans, all paths eventually lead to the same direction. Continue cultivating hard, and live well with no regrets.

“You, can leave now. And since you were the one who deciphered the riddles of these four paintings, I shall give them to you.”

Qin Wentian gazed at Gongyang Hong as he accepted the paintings. Standing up, he bowed again, as he departed.

“Take care of yourself Senior. In the future, this junior here will visit you often.” Qin Wentian called out as he walked into the bamboo forest. Little Rascal scuttled from the side, following behind the silhouette of Qin Wentian.

AGM 105 – Teasing By Luo Huan

The Emperor Star Academy was more lively compared to the past. As the year's end was approaching, many of the students that were out tempering themselves returned. Under the sunlight, the youthful students chattered and chattered, filling the Emperor Star Academy with a vibrant atmosphere.

Within the academy, the topics of discussion among the students were naturally about the most powerful students currently in the academy, and who would obtain the best result in the Jun Lin Banquet. There were also many who brought up the name of Qin Wentian. This name – Qin Wentian, could be said to be one of the most frequently brought up names in the academy during this year, even more so when compared to Luo Qianqiu of yesteryear.

After all, this year, this new student who had just stepped into the academy had done too many things of great impact.

Many of the returning students expressed admiration towards Qin Wentian after hearing about his deeds. Naturally, there were some as well who expressed disdain and even wanted to spar with this new student to see if the legends about him was true.

All these public discussions caused Qin Wentian to garner much attention whenever he walked through the academy's courtyard. Especially after he returned from the painting incident caused by the Royal Academy, there were even more eyes focusing on him. Qin Wentian could only smile bitterly in his heart, he finally felt what it is to be like to be a 'celebrity'.

However, this kind of ‘attention’, where he would be scrutinised anywhere he went, didn’t really feel good.

After he returned to his own residence, Qin Wentian discovered that other than Qin Yao, Luo Huan was there as well.

“Senior Sister, why are you here?” Qin Wentian smiled.

“I’m here to chat with Qin Yao. You this fellow created such a huge commotion outside, and have already become a ‘celebrity’. When will you gift your senior sister a divine inscription painting as well?” A smile that was not a smile appeared on the face of Luo Huan as she replied.

“If Senior Sister really likes it, the next time I create a Divine Inscription painting, I shall personally deliver it.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Okay, you are not allowed to lie to me.” Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes flickered with a brilliant light.

“Naturally. Not to mention one painting, if Senior Sister wishes for five or six of those paintings, I will also comply.” Qin Wentian reply, causing the smile on Luo Huan’s face to become even more radiant. “Good, I didn’t dote on you for nothing. Come, let senior sister give you a kiss.”

“Er.....” Qin Wentian, looking at the charming appearance of

Luo Huan, bitterly smiled. “Senior Sister, you should stop tempting me like this.”

The appeal of Luo Huan was exceptionally great. Qin Wentian had met many beautiful girls before, but only Mo Qingcheng and Luo Huan were capable of moving his heart. However, the beauty of the two of them were in totally different categories. Mo Qingcheng’s beauty was ethereal, akin to a fairy on earth, just looking at her would cause one to be unable to remain calm. Luo Huan’s beauty was more of a sex appeal type, charming and sexy, extremely attractive to men.

Looking at the countenance of Qin Wentian, Luo Huan also began to laugh. Qin Yao stated, “Sister Luo Huan, you should stop teasing this little fellow. Speaking of which, this fellow is already 17, I wonder if he has his eyes on any girls out there.”

“I’m curious as well.” Luo Huan stared at Qin Wentian as she asked.

“Sister, my only focus now is on cultivation, and to save Father. Where would I have time to think about matters of the heart?” Qin Wentian looked at the glances the two beauties shot him, and couldn’t help but feel slightly awkward.

“Refusing to answer? Seems like there is someone in his heart. Wait, let me guess.” The beautiful eyes of Luo Huan flickered as she continued, “Could it be the number one beauty of our Chu Country, Mo Qingcheng? I heard that during the banquet hosted by Chu Tianjiao, she intentionally brought you somewhere else for a chat, causing many males to die of envy.”

“Senior Sister, stop guessing randomly.” Qin Wentian smiled bitterly, as images of his interactions with Mo Qingcheng kept appearing in his mind.

“Why are you so shy to admit it?” Luo Huan continued teasing, “That delicate little lass is beautiful indeed, and fully worthy of the name – the number one beauty of Chu Country. At the very least, I have not met a more ravishing woman inside the Royal Capital. Not only that, her talent is also extraordinary as well. In the Royal Capital, even within the 10 prodigies, there were several that wanted to woo her.”

Luo Huan looked at the seemingly interested Qin Wentian, as she continued, “No matter how I look at it, I still think that only my little junior brother is worthy of that little lass. Do you want senior sister to get Teacher Mustang to play matchmaker for you? That little lass’ grandpa is none other than our grand teacher!”

How could Qin Wentian defend against the barrage of Luo Huan’s powerful teases. Like before, he could only smile bitterly.

“Since you are not saying anything, it means that you’ve admitted it. A young genius coupled together with the number one beauty of Chu. Excellent, excellent.” Luo Huan murmured to herself, as Qin Yao, looking at the embarrassed expression on Qin Wentian’s face, couldn’t help but laugh out loud. In her heart, she was thinking that if Qin Wentian could really marry such a beautiful talented girl, it would naturally be excellent.

“Okay, I shall stop teasing you. But what I said was true. If you want to woo that little lass, your senior sister will support you all the way.” Luo Huan laughed, “Today, there’s a gathering being held at the Emperor Star Monument. Do you want to attend it with me? This way you would be able to interact with the other elites of our academy.”

“What gathering is that?” Qin Wentian curiously asked.

“It’s going to be the year end soon, and as many students tempering themselves outside return to the academy, they would like to gather together, exchanging of pointers and showcasing the fruits of their labour for the year. There would also be sincere people who truly want to interact and extend their social circle. You should go, you may even learn some things from there.”

Luo Huan looked at Qin Wentian as she continued her explanation. “Those who attend the gathering later all have above average martial prowess. At the very least, they will be at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation or they would be embarrassed to sit under the monument. However for you, you are already qualified. Ranked number one among the new batch of students as well as a 17 year old 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist. The Emperor Star Academy has never had such a genius before.”

“Senior Sister, stop praising me.” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled, “I will go with Senior Sister to take a look. After all, I just joined the Emperor Star Academy and might as well borrow this chance to take a look at the other elites of our school.”

“I will go along with both of you to take a look.” Qin Yao laughed.

“Okay, we will all go together.” Luo Huan pulled Qin Yao along as both of them walked shoulder to shoulder, showing their close relationship. Upon seeing this scene, Qin Wentian felt a trace of warmth in his heart. Although Senior Sister Luo Huan loved to joke about, and often ignored boundaries when she spoke, she had always truly cared for him and Qin Yao. This type of caring appeared so ordinary that you wouldn’t be able to feel it unless you experienced it yourself.

Among students of the Emperor Star Academy, who wouldn’t work hard? Where would there be someone who was willing to spend large amounts of time on others? However, Luo Huan was precisely such an individual. Initially, Luo Huan didn’t have any relationship with Qin Yao. But now, not only did she take care of her and form a friendship with her, she also spent time visiting her often, fearing that Qin Yao would be lonely.

This gratitude, Qin Wentian silently engraved it in his heart. If he were to say it out loud, based on the personality of Luo Huan, she would most probably ignore him.

Within the Emperor Star Academy, there were nine stone monuments known as the Emperor Star Monuments. On them were engravings about the 3,000 year history of the Emperor Star Academy.

In front of the monuments, there was a circular field, with a

stone stage in the middle. Several youthful silhouettes were currently seated on the stone stage.

Every year, there would be many youthful elites of the academy sitting on the stone stage, looking at the Emperor Star Monuments, basking themselves in the glory of those that came before them. At the same time, they were also determined to be one of those individuals that could create history, leaving stories behind for future students to look at.

And below the monuments, there were even more silhouettes. Their gazes were filled with reverence and admiration as they gazed at the people sitting on the stone stage.

“The seniors above all have a cultivation base of the 7th level of Arterial Circulation or above. I wonder when I will reach the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation.”

“Not only were their cultivation bases at least at the 7th level, all of them have done something impactful or have some history behind them. If not, they would be embarrassed to sit together with the other elites.”

“You are right, our academy has so many years of history, and the new bloods every year are all extraordinary, their talents far higher compared to the rest. Just at merely the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation, we have countless people with cultivation bases at this stage. If you weren’t something special, how could you have the qualifications to even sit with the rest of them.”

Below the monuments, many people were discussing the elites on the stone stage as they gazed upon the silhouettes on the stage. They were evidently filled with great curiosity.

“Senior Luo Huan from the Greencloud Association is here. Senior Luo Huan has mesmerized a lot of people with her beauty.”

“The beauty sitting beside her should be Qin Yao, and the guy that came with her should be Qin Wentian. He is also here today!”

A pathway opened up through the crowd. On the stone stage, many of the elites turned their attention at Luo Huan and Qin Wentian, only to hear one of them saying, “Luo Huan, I heard rumors that you’ve broke through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. Quickly come up to the stage.”

“Junior Brother Qin, you are also welcome up here.” Another person smiled.

Luo Huan pulled Qin Wentian along as they ascended the steps, sitting on stone seats next to each other. Upon seeing this, sharp glints of light could be seen radiating from the eyes of many males. Luo Huan seemed to be very close with Qin Wentian, and many of the students wasn’t feeling too good about it in their hearts. After all, Luo Huan’s beauty and talent made her a highly popular goddess whom many wished to pursue.

Feeling the enmity leveled against him, Qin Wentian bitterly smiled in his heart. He silently questioned if Luo Huan purposely did this to tease him. He could feel cold stares trained on him from

all directions.

Despite this, his countenance remained normal as he glanced at the silhouettes on the stone stage. There were a total of about 30 elites on the stage, and all of them had a high probability of breaking through to Yuanfu.

Not only that, there were several others like Luo Qianqiu and Orchon who did not appear.

Just the Emperor Star Academy alone already had so many elites. One could only imagine how terrifyingly resplendent the sparks caused by all the elites would be in the Jun Lin Banquet.

AGM 106 – Insidious Intent

In front of the Emperor Star Monuments, all of the elites were sat on the stone seats on the stage. The attention of all the other students was riveted onto them.

At this moment, a figure in front of the monument laughed, “Only one more month to the end of the year. Being able to sit here together with my various brothers and sisters to discuss our experiences in cultivation and exchange pointers is really one of the happiest things in the world.”

“Senior Qiu is too polite. Just being able to sit here and chat with Senior Qiu can already be counted as a fortuitous event.” Someone politely added.

“This person is named Qiu Mo, and is extremely powerful. Among the ranks of the 10 prodigies, there are two from the Emperor Star Academy. Qiu Mo is one of them, and he’s ranked 4th within them.” Luo Huan whispered to Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian seriously cast a glance at Qiu Mo. This person looked to be 18 to 19 years of age, and had a scholarly disposition, looking gentle and refined, radiating warmth and approachability.

“And who’s the other one?” Qin Wentian curiously asked

“The other one is standing by the side of Qiu Mo. His name is Jiang Xiu, ranked 10th out of the 10 prodigies in the Royal Capital. However, you cannot underestimate any of the 10 prodigies. The 10 prodigies are all the strongest elites in the Royal Capital below the

age of 20, and among all arterial circulation cultivators, their cultivation bases are the closest to stepping into Yuanfu. Their martial prowess is also many times stronger when compared to others at the same level.”

Luo Huan continued, “The 10 prodigies, without a doubt, will attend the Jun Lin Banquet every year. Naturally, the ranking with the prodigies will also change following the conclusion of the grand banquet.”

“Luo Cheng, for the past year you’ve stayed hidden in the Asura Faction, and there haven’t be any traces of you. Your martial prowess must have improved significantly, do you mind sharing your experiences and exchanging pointers with the rest of us?” The 4th ranked among the 10 prodigies, Qiu Mo, was silently regarded as the host of the gathering, and he took the initiative to gaze upon a mature-looking youth.

Although Luo Cheng wasn’t that old, he was already over 20, and had a maturity to him that couldn’t be compared to people his age. Not only that, there were also traces of a frenzied wildness in his eyes.

Those from the Asura Faction were all mad men. They were extremely cruel to themselves and would temper themselves in the Dark Forest for long periods of time, disregarding their lives. Thus, their combat ability and martial prowess were also above the norm.

“Is there anyone who wishes to try?” Luo Cheng calmly spoke, causing the countenance of all to freeze slightly.

Last year, Luo Cheng had a cultivation base at the peak of the 6th level. Rumor had it that currently, he had already stepped into the 8th level of Arterial Circulation and had overwhelming combat abilities.

“Let me try then.” A figure spoke, and momentarily the gazes of the spectators all shifted to him. Following which, Mountain approached the centre of the stone stage as he looked at Luo Cheng, “Let me see how much you have improved.”

“Mountain, be careful.” Luo Huan shouted. Mountain grinned as he nodded to Luo Huan and Qin Wentian.

“What is Senior Mountain’s current level of cultivation?” Qin Wentian looked to Luo Huan as he inquired.

“Peak of the 8th level.” Luo Huan replied.

Luo Cheng rose from his seat and approached Mountain. In his hand, Astral Light coalesced into the form of a great sabre, emitting waves of icy chill.

Boom! Luo Cheng burst forward, akin to a demonic beast. His body sank as the great sabre swung downwards, hacking through the void. A sabre light could be seen trailing behind the arcs of his attack, resplendent and ice cold.

Mountain shouted as his fist exploded forwards, as tough as steel,

blasting forth to meet the sabre attack.

However, the sabre lights of Luo Cheng changed direction with the speed of lightning, aiming straight for chopping the throat of Mountain. Even though the sun had not yet set, the spectators could already feel traces of coldness.

The sabre edge was too cold.

“What a unpredictable sabre. Senior Mountain will be at a disadvantage in this battle.” Qin Wentian intoned in a low voice.

Indeed, after a few exchanges, Mountain was already exhausted. The power of his attacks didn't lose out to his opponent, and even exceeded Luo Cheng's. However, the sabre attacks of Luo Cheng were too unpredictable, and extremely mysterious to the extent where one couldn't even begin to identify which innate technique was he using. Not only that, the sabre attacks contained within them a murderous intent, as though it was only used for killing.

“Pu.....” Another beam of cold light flashed by, as both of them halted their movements. The sabre of Luo Cheng disappeared, as Mountain stood dumbly beside him, stating, “I've lost.”

A few strands of hair drifted down from Mountain's head. Mountain trembled as he recalled the last exchange of blows. If Luo Cheng had shifted the angle of his sabre attacks ever so slightly, he would've already lost his life.

“Your attacks are too direct and orderly. Your innate techniques do not contain the slightest bit of concept from your own insights, how could you not be defeated?” Luo Cheng calmly spoke as he walked back to his seat and sat down.

“Many thanks for the guidance.” Mountain recovered swiftly as he smiled at Luo Cheng, before returning to his seat. He didn’t seemed to be too bothered by his loss earlier.

In that instant, Qin Wentian understood why these types of gatherings were hosted. An exchange of pointers between geniuses, learning from the experiences of others, understanding where one’s weaknesses lie. This lesson, one would never be able to learn it through normal classes. It was only through directly experiencing it would they be able to understand where their limit was.

“Indeed. Innate techniques were created by people before us. Why couldn’t we incorporate our creativity, concepts and own insights into the innate techniques that we learnt? The sabre techniques of Luo Cheng obviously incorporated his own insights. The insights gained at the border of death through death-like training would naturally have more killing power behind them.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed in his heart as he thought, once again, of the Divine Inscription painting he had created. In that painting, the pinnacle of his attacks was something he wanted to attain, yet he was still unable to gain enlightenment.

Afterwards, the other elites also started sparring, and each had their own special characteristics.

A youth exerted the strength of Arterial Circulation to its peak. Every part of his body felt as though he could use them for attack. This person caused Qin Wentian to realise that there would be something he could learn from everyone who was qualified to participate in the gathering.

Below the stage, the other students were watching the sparring of their seniors attentively. To them, this was a hard-to-get opportunity.

At this moment on the stone stage, Qiu Mo's gaze landed on Qin Wentian, as he said with a smile, "Junior Brother Qin's talent is extremely outstanding. Able to become a 3rd level divine inscriptionist at such a young age, his name resounding throughout the Chu Country. Do you want to share your insights regarding cultivation with any of your senior brothers and sisters on this stage?"

Qin Wentian was still in his first year. Not only that, he was the only new student atop of that stone stage. Naturally, the other elites there were his senior martial brothers and sisters.

"Compared to all the seniors sitting here, my cultivation base is shallow and I don't dare to speak about the sharing of experiences and exchanging of pointers. Observing and learning from the exchanges of others, this is the thing I should do." Qin Wentian replied humbly. It wasn't that he was overly polite. Although his talent was extraordinary, and his martial prowess outstanding, he still felt that he had a lot to learn before he was qualified to seek the guidances of these elite seniors.

“Junior Brother is too modest, using only a year to step into the 6th level of Arterial Circulation from Body Refinement, this is a feat that is incredibly difficult to accomplish. And what’s more, the most impressive thing is that your comprehension in the field of Divine Inscriptions has reached such a terrifying level. Everyone knows that mastering the art of weapon forging requires an exceptionally long period of time, but yet you still managed to reach such a high level. Obviously, Junior Brother is a talent in both cultivation and the field of Divine Inscriptions. You are too overly modest.”

Qiu Mo smiled as he spoke, adopting a elegant demeanour.

“I guess that’s because the first Astral Soul I condensed was a forging-type Astral Soul, and thus I have some advantages when it comes to the inscription of Divine Imprints. In addition, I was also lucky, that’s how it came to be.” Qin Wentian calmly replied.

“I see, but I still have to warn Junior Brother that cultivation isn’t that easy. After all, this is still a cultivation-oriented world. Absolute strength is the only guarantee of true power. Divine Inscriptions are important, but they will take up too much of your cultivation time. And if you immerse yourself too deeply in it, your martial heart will not be pure and you may go astray from your intended path.”

Qiu Mo slowly continued, “After all, on the path of cultivation, there have been countless fallen geniuses. Not only that, there were also many who met a bottleneck after they broke through and were unable to advance any further in their entire lives. Naturally,

there were also others who seemed to cultivate at an extremely quick pace, only to slowly become ordinary because their martial hearts were not resolute enough.”

The tone of Qiu Mo was akin to a guiding lecture from a senior to a junior, but many felt that there was something amiss. Qiu Mo should be praising Qin Wentian’s outstanding talent instead. Despite his reminder to Qin Wentian about the pit holes of cultivation, there were many hidden meanings in his words, it was as though he was saying that Qin Wentian would become a fallen genius.

The words of Qiu Mo, be it intentional or not, seemed to contain traces of being against Qin Wentian. It was just extremely well hidden in his honeyed words.

Qin Wentian was not an idiot, naturally, he also felt that something was amiss. However, he didn’t quite understand why Qiu Mo would be against him. He had never interacted with Qiu Mo before, how could there be any misunderstandings between them?

However, he wouldn’t choose to express his anger in front of so many, so he casually replied with a laugh, “Thank you for the reminder Senior.”

“It would naturally be excellent if you could listen to my advice.” Qiu Mo nodded his head at Qin Wentian as he continued, “A 17 year old Divine Inscriptionist, you are the first in our Chu Country. You should have met with some fortuitous encounter and been able to obtain several 3rd level Divine Imprints, which

eventually led to your accomplishments today. However, on the pathway of cultivation, one shouldn't depend too much on fortuitous encounters, but focus on one's hard work instead."

If one were to say that the traces of Qiu Mo being against Qin Wentian were extremely well hidden in his first statement, there was no mistaking his intent now after he made the second statement.

Within the honey-sounding words of Qiu Mo, to put it lightly, he was suspecting the qualifications of Qin Wentian. Firstly, he said that there was no other 17 year old 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist in the history of Chu, and after which, he said that Qin Wentian met with a fortuitous encounter, and even had many 3rd level Divine Imprints with him that others did not have. Wasn't this openly hinting that the 3rd level imprints in that painting weren't created by him but were instead something which he had already obtained from before?

To put it heavily, this wasn't merely suspecting the qualifications of Qin Wentian, but was also extremely venomous.

The heaven-defying 3rd level Divine Inscription painting that contained a never seen before human-type Divine Imprint. How many types of Divine Imprints did Qin Wentian obtain from his fortuitous encounter?

Within the academy, it was still not too bad. But if news of this was to leak out of the academy, how many powers would want to take action against Qin Wentian for the sake of obtaining those Divine Imprints?

Qin Wentian's eyebrows were furrowed intensely. And Luo Huan beside him also had an unsightly countenance. The intent behind Qiu Mo's words was too insidious!

AGM 107 – Deliberate Target

Qin Wentian sat cross-leggedly on the stone stage as the gazes of the other elites landed on his body. The words of Qiu Mo somehow reminded them; was the rumored heaven-defying painting really personally created by Qin Wentian?

If he really could inscribe 3rd level Divine Imprints at the young age of 17, what sort of extraordinary fortuitous encounters did he have?

“Qin Wentian possesses many secrets.” This thought arose in many of the spectators’ hearts as they seriously contemplated Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian could clearly feel the gazes riveted onto him, while a hint of anger blazed in his heart. He was extremely infuriated, naturally, he did have the reason to be so.

Today was the first time he met Qiu Mo. If Qiu Mo merely questioned his qualifications, he could still accept that. But very obviously, Qiu Mo’s malicious intent could be felt hiding under the layers of honey-sounding words, spoken with a caring smile and gentle features. What was his motive exactly?

Glancing at the calm eyes of Qiu Mo, Qin Wentian forcefully stilled his emotions as he replied, “I don’t really agree with the words of Senior Brother.”

“Oh?” Qiu Mo laughed as he continued, “Could it be that Junior

Brother Qin still wishes to depend on fortuitous events and has no intention to work hard in cultivation based on your own efforts?”

“Fortuitous events are a type of luck, and luck only comes naturally and infrequently. Naturally, I would not intentionally seek after something so illusory like that. However, don’t you feel that luck is also a type of strength?” Qin Wentian smiled at Qiu Mo as he continued, “Now, if there was a 4th level Divine Weapon, or a heavenly graded innate technique randomly lying on the ground in front of you, would Senior want them or not?”

“I would want them.” Qiu Mo replied.

“Oh? This doesn’t seem to match the logic Senior Brother had expounded on earlier. Why doesn’t Senior Brother depend on your own capabilities instead of fortuitous events to obtain them?”

Qiu Mo looked at Qin Wentian, his expression filled with slight contempt, “Your answers are naught but specious arguments, and total nonsense.”

“Specious arguments?” Qin Wentian continued unperturbed, “The path of cultivation is fraught with numerous dangers. Those that stands at the top, which of them hadn’t experienced countless life and death experiences? Without luck, how would they be able to turn peril into safety, finding their way out of a predicament? And how would they constantly acquire stronger cultivation arts and innate techniques? For those that stands at the top, other than their own talent and hard work, they also need a certain amount of luck. Does Senior agree?”

“Agreed. That’s why I said, fortuitous events are secondary things. The most important thing is to depend on oneself. Why must Junior Brother be in such a hurry to defend yourself?” Qiu Mo laughed.

“The 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao, his birth, to him, isn’t it also a kind of fortuitous event? Born into the royal clan, which allows him to enjoy an almost unlimited amount of cultivation resources. But yet, people of Chu were filled with respect and reverence, and still referred to him as the Heaven’s Pride of his generation. Does Senior dare to stand right in front of Chu Tianjiao’s face, telling him that – your accomplishments today were all the result of you being born into the royal clan. You must remember that you should not depend on fortuitous events but instead depend on your own abilities for cultivation?”

Qin Wentian, feeling neither joy nor anger, tranquilly continued. The atmosphere on the stone stage also subtly underwent a change.

The spectators naturally could feel that Qiu Mo was deliberating targeting Qin Wentian. After all, he was the senior, and also ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital. Despite his deliberate targeting of Qin Wentian, one almost couldn’t pick up any fault in his words. But who would have thought that Qin Wentian actually used the example of Chu Tianjiao to refute Qiu Mo directly.

“Ridiculous, do you think you have the qualifications to compare yourself with the 3rd Prince?” A cold-sounding voice rang out. Qin

Wentian shifted his gaze to the one who spoke and discovered that it was none other than the youth standing beside Qiu Mo! Jiang Xiu was also part of the 10 prodigies in the Royal Capital, but was ranked the last among them. To those who ranked above him, he naturally had respect for their abilities. Not to mention the 2nd ranked Chu Tianjiao.

Qin Wentian used Chu Tianjiao as an example, which also meant that he placed Chu Tianjiao at the same level as him. Naturally, Jiang Xiu felt extremely unhappy about this.

Today, Qin Wentian was merely there to listen and observe the exchange of pointers among the senior elites. But who would have thought that Qiu Mo would have deliberately singled him out to be his target. As a hotblooded youth, in the face of these countless provocations, how could he not be angered? Qin Wentian coldly snorted a reply, “And may I ask, why not?”

“The 3rd Prince, Chu Tianjiao, already stepped into Yuanfu one year ago. And you, what is your level of cultivation?” Jiang Xiu gazed at Qin Wentian, and a cold intent flashed in his eyes.

“I’ve only been in the academy for a year, stepping into the 6th level of Arterial Circulation from Body Refinement within this short span of time. Defeating the sophomore Yanaro, easily able to hold my own against those at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. And lastly, how many youths under 20 in the Chu country are able to inscribe 3rd level Divine Inscriptions? How am I not comparable to him? Although now I’m not the equal of him, it doesn’t mean this will be the case forever.”

The pride in Qin Wentian’s heart ignited as he looked straight at

Jiang Xiu, refuting him mercilessly. “Based on your logic, those who are weak would never dare to compare themselves with those stronger than them. Could it be that you think weaker cultivators should only compare themselves with people weaker than them? How laughable. If one doesn’t even have the guts to chase after those stronger than them, how could they ever improve? No wonder you are ranked the last out of the 10 prodigies, so this was the reason.”

“Impudent!” Jiang Xiu was extremely agitated by the words of Qin Wentian, he roared in anger, a cold light flickering in his eyes.

The words spoken by Qin Wentian weren’t polite at all, and even went all out to slap Jiang Xiu in the face. Jiang Xiu wasn’t as restrained as Qiu Mo, and he involuntarily shouted out. As a member of the 10 prodigies, whenever he appeared in the academy, he always enjoyed looks of respect from others. But at this moment in front of so many students, Qin Wentian as a new student, actually humiliated him to such an extent. Naturally, he felt that he has lost all of his face.

“Impudent? What impudent? Those that pursue the path of cultivation, shouldn’t they have unwavering wills and determination, seeking to be the strongest? And as students of the Emperor Star Academy, who would bear to be under the pedestal of others? Today, the reason why Senior Qiu Mo could ‘lecture’ me with his speech is very simple. All because he is stronger than me.”

Qin Wentian slowly continued, causing the crowd underneath the stone stage to agree with him. The words of Qin Wentian were like a needle drawing blood. Qiu Mo could afford to speak to him

like this, all because he was ranked 4th within the 10 prodigies while he himself, Qin Wentian, only had a cultivation at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation.

Just like what Qin Wentian had said. If it was Chu Tianjiao, Qiu Mo wouldn't dare to speak in this way. The reason was simply that Chu Tianjiao was stronger than Qiu Mo.

But naturally, if Qiu Mo had kind intentions and merely sought to remind Qin Wentian of the pitfalls, he wouldn't be so angry. But Qiu Mo was obviously deliberately targeting him, harbouring malicious intentions.

The atmosphere became more and more awkward as Qiu Mo's expressions flickered. He did not think that Qin Wentian's rebuttal would be so sharp.

But finally, it was Qiu Mo who broke the silence.

Qiu Mo displayed a smile on his face, as an intermittent pressure began blasting forth. His body slowly began to float up in the air, as an intense Yuan Energy emanated from him.

Gradually, the sitting cross-leggedly Qiu Mo floated up into the air, causing the hearts of the spectators to tremble.

“Yuanfu Realm!”

“Senior Brother Qiu Mo has stepped into Yuanfu. How

powerful!”

In the rankings of the 10 prodigies last year, Senior Qiu Mo was 4th whilst Immortal Drunken Wine was ranked 3rd. Now that Immortal Drunken Wine had yet to break into Yuanfu, this year, Senior Qiu Mo would obtain his ranking for sure.

In an instant, discussions erupted within the crowd as many were still in shock.

Going from Arterial Circulation to Yuanfu equated to a stepping across realms. Many geniuses would still need to spend a large amount of time before they could break through to Yuanfu.

Not only that, there were also many geniuses that had outstanding performance in the realm of Arterial Circulation, only to become ordinary after breaking through to Yuanfu. A different realm equals to a different heaven and earth. There was no comparison.

From this perspective, Qiu Mo’s lecture to Qin Wentian wasn’t wrong. Indeed, there were many fallen geniuses about in the world.

Now that Qiu Mo had stepped into Yuanfu, he undoubtedly had the qualifications to lecture Qin Wentian. Because, he had already stepped through the gap separating Arterial Circulation and Yuanfu, thereby proving himself.

He who was ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies, after stepping into Yuanfu would only get stronger and stronger. Gradually, the distance between him and the rest of the elites that hadn't broke through would only increase. And since Immortal Drunken Wine had not broken through to Yuanfu, the distance between them would only be lengthened.

Naturally, after stepping into Yuanfu, this also meant that Qiu Mo would no longer be able to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet at the end of the year. In comparison to breaking into Yuanfu, the Jun Lin Banquet was not as important. After all, the Jun Lin Banquet was a showdown between the mightiest elites from all over the continent, and only a selected few would be able to obtain the rewards that were given. Stepping into Yuanfu earlier was a more secure path of obtaining power.

And as for Qiu Mo, if he hadn't broken through to Yuanfu, his cultivation base would have been at the peak of Arterial Circulation. But despite this, he wasn't confident enough to say that he would be ranked within the top few among all the various geniuses and elites that were going to be attending the banquet. Since he had an opportunity to break through, naturally he would not intentionally suppress it; it was unknown when he would have another opportunity like that again.

“You are right, I do have the qualifications to lecture you. For no other reason than I'm stronger than you.”

Qiu Mo floated in the air as he gazed disdainfully at Qin Wentian. At this moment, his arrogance was overwhelming, with no intention to mask it.

“To think that Junior Brother Qin was so easily angered merely because of a statement, you are still too impatient. In any case, there’s no wrong in my words, there are countless fallen geniuses. Even in the Emperor Star Academy, there are still many that are unable to graduate. Why? Because despite having such a long time, they were still unable to step across the gap into Yuanfu. Now because of fortuitous events, Junior Brother’s path of cultivation has been overly smooth and has not met with any bottlenecks. However, I can tell you for sure if you want to step across the gap to Yuanfu, you will need at least 5 or 6 years. By the time you do so, the disparity between you and others who stepped into Yuanfu earlier will only grow further and further apart. How would you compare with others then?”

Qin Mo’s tone took on the tone of an elder lecturing a recalcitrant child. Him, that had already stepped into Yuanfu, had already unconsciously regarded himself a supreme existence, higher when compared to the other students.

“If Senior Brother truly lectures me for my own good, Qin Wentian would naturally heed your advice. However, from the tone of Senior’s voice, you seemed to have already judged that I only have my accomplishments today due to various fortuitous events, and in your eyes, I’m already a fallen genius. It seems as though you are cursing me.” Qin Wentian looked straight at Qiu Mo as he continued, “I’ve only been cultivating for a short period of time and dared not say that I’ve had any accomplishments. Taking one step at a time on the pathway of cultivation, making each step with a resolute heart. Even though I may have had some fortuitous encounters, my martial heart and intent have never wavered before.”

“What Senior has said is right. After stepping into Yuanfu, naturally you would have the qualifications to lecture me. However, don’t you feel that your attitude is too overbearing for someone just merely at Yuanfu? Those who didn’t know would think that in our entire Emperor Star Academy, only Senior Qiu has broken through to Yuanfu.”

The calm voice of Qin Wentian contained a hint of provocation as he stared at Qiu Mo, “What’s there to be proud of? You merely started cultivation a few years before me.”

As the sound of Qin Wentian’s voice faded, the crowd also went quiet. The words of Qin Wentian became increasingly sharp, as he opposed the words of Qiu Mo with equal harshness!

AGM 108 – Exchanging Pointers

Qiu Mo, at the Yuanfu Realm, as well as being a member of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital, had long established his name.

Qin Wentian was a new blood of the Emperor Star Academy. Within this short span of a year's time, he had become a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist.

Qiu Mo was the senior, and thus had the qualifications to lecture Qin Wentian. However, his words, weren't lecturing, but were deliberately targeting instead.

Qin Wentian naturally needed to rebut. There were many Yuanfu students within the academy, and in the beginning, Qiu Mo still acted humbly, but soon after, it was if he was the only Yuanfu cultivator within the whole Emperor Star Academy.

“Junior Brother Qin is right, Senior Qiu Mo merely started cultivating earlier than him. But what gives you the right to act as though you are the only Yuanfu cultivator in our academy? Even if we don't mention the year when you first joined the academy, just speaking of your accomplishments last year, they are far from being able to rival Qin Wentian's.”

The sound of Luo Huan's voice rang out, as she smiled lightly. “If it was not for the fact that Senior Qiu started cultivation a few years earlier, you indeed would have no qualifications at all to be even mentioned in the same breath as Junior Brother Qin.”

“Arguments are meaningless. If you remain unconvinced, rather than talking to paint a beautiful picture, why not let us spar to exchange some pointers.” Jiang Xiu coldly continued, “After all, today is suppose to be a gathering where we test out our techniques against each other. A skillful mouth, doesn’t really have much persuasion.”

“You really know how to talk big, you want an Arterial Circulation cultivator to spar against a Yuanfu cultivator? Why don’t you try sparring against one yourself?” Mountain coldly snorted, rage coloring his voice.

“Exchanging pointers doesn’t mean that it needs to be based on combat. If Senior Qiu Mo really wanted to spar against Qin Wentian, naturally he wouldn’t be allowed to use his Yuanfu cultivation base.” Someone at the side spoke out. Qiu Mo was already back in his seat, and he involuntarily laughed, “Other than using one’s cultivation base to power one’s innate techniques, we could merely spar using the stances and moves of our attacks without being powered by our cultivation bases. Victory will be achieved based on one’s comprehension, ability to adapt, and reaction speed. Wouldn’t that be a beautiful solution?”

“That may be true, however after breaking through to Yuanfu, one’s attributes would increase and their senses become sharper as well. Adding into consideration the fact that he should have a deeper understanding of his own innate techniques because his cultivation level is higher, Qiu Mo naturally would gain an unfair advantage.” Luo Huan scornfully replied. “If that’s the case, it’s the same difference.”

“I have not stepped into Yuanfu yet. Why not let me take the place of Senior Qiu Mo to exchange some pointers with Qin Wentian?” Jiang Xiu abruptly spoke. “Qin Wentian is too arrogant, and in addition to the confidence Luo Huan has in him, why don’t I be the test to see where his true capabilities lie?”

“Luo Huan, if Qin Wentian continues to hesitate, I shall speak of this no more.” Jiang Xiu’s eyes were filled with a cold laughter, provocation could be clearly heard in his tone.

Luo Huan furrowed her brows as she looked to Qin Wentian.

After all, Qin Wentian had only been in the academy for a single year, and had also invested a large amount of time in the study of Divine Inscriptions. Naturally, his understanding towards innate techniques wouldn’t be as profound as others’. Just based on this point alone, Qin Wentian would suffer a disadvantage.

Since they were going to disregard the differences in cultivation base, merely competing with the moves and stances of their innate techniques. In such a battle, naturally the one who was versed in more types of innate techniques would win.

Qiu Mo didn’t continue speaking, as Jiang Xiu has taken over for him. He was naturally content to maintain his silence.

As the gazes of the crowd landed onto Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian’s countenance still remained unperturbed, no one could tell what he was thinking.

Qin Wentian was deep in contemplation at this moment. He was sure he had never offended Qiu Mo or Jiang Xiu before, but why did the two of them seemed to be so against him, overbearingly forceful and deliberately targeting him? Even now, they still wanted to witness him shaming himself to prove to others that the ‘so-called’ talent of Qin Wentian wasn’t able to withstand a single blow if he lost the battle.

Unable to guess at the reason, Qin Wentian decided not to ponder too deeply on it. The crowd only saw him slowly standing up and strolling towards the circular stone stage, as he calmly stated.

“Senior Brother, I await your guidance.”

Qin Wentian stood in the middle of the stage, looking straight at Jiang Xiu. Action always speaks louder than words.

Jiang Xiu glared at Qin Wentian. Standing up, his body erupted with force as he jumped through the air, landing in front of Qin Wentian.

“I won’t be polite then.” Jiang Xiu’s gaze were as sharp as unsheathed swords.

“This junior brother here doesn’t really have a profound understanding regarding innate techniques. What I’ve understood could only said to be the tip of the iceberg. I hope Senior won’t be too harsh on me when we exchange blows later.” The humble reaction by Qin Wentian caught the crowd off guard. This... didn’t seem like the Qin Wentian from moments earlier.

“Hehe, my weapon will be a sword. Choose your Divine Weapon.” Jiang Xiu drew a sword out from his back. Although it was a Divine Weapon, as long as one did not channel energy into it, it was no different from a normal weapon, albeit many times sharper.

Since the two of them agreed not to spar with their cultivation bases, in order to determine the victor, the next best solution was to use a weapon and fight with their weapon-specific style innate techniques. If not, if one were to use a palm-type innate technique, with no cultivation base to power that technique, how could they even blast forth the palm prints? And how could that still be called an innate technique.

“My choice of weapon would be the halberd.” Qin Wentian withdrew the ancient halberd from his interspatial ring with a thought. The ancient halberd wielded in his hands had its tip pointing at the ground, as the crescent blades on the halberd glowed with a cold light.

“Please.” Qin Wentian strengthened his grip on the halberd as he looked at his opponent.

The palms of Jiang Xiu wavered slightly as the sword in his hands emitted an icy light. He then stepped forwards towards Qin Wentian. And every step of his also contained a terrifying pressure. Although he wasn’t using his cultivation base, their fleshy bodies were all extremely powerful due to already passing through the realm of Body Refinement.

The sword in his hands flashed, and as it transformed into a shadow, a sword light filled with coldness pierced towards Qin Wentian.

“Shadow Snow Swordplay.” The elites on the stage were all extraordinary geniuses. Instantly, they were able to tell that this was a low-tier earth-grade innate technique that came from the 4th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

The sword as cold as snow, the sword light like a shadow.

This sword of Jiang Xiu pierced like a bolt of lightning, aiming straight towards the throat of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian retreated two steps, as he pierced forwards with the ancient halberd, aiming for the tip of the sword, wanting to clash directly with Jiang Xiu.

“How could the wondrous Shadow Snow Swordplay be caught so easily.” The crowd were speculating in their hearts, and as they expected, the sword of Jiang Xiu abruptly changed direction. Like a snowflake that was drifting freely with the wind, it curved naturally, changing its target to the centre of Qin Wentian’s eyebrows, as the body of Jiang Xiu moved together with his sword, graceful beyond comparison.

“Despite not being allowed to use his cultivation base to power his innate techniques, Senior Jiang really exceeds everyone’s expectations. Only in this case would one be able to see the profoundness of Senior Jiang’s sword techniques.” The crowd

below couldn't help but to exclaim in wonder. What a mysterious swordplay. If one were to power it with astral energy, how powerful would it be then?

Qin Wentian continued to retreat, as the ancient halberd he wielded began a dance of its own, transforming into a spiral, as a manifestation of a Xuanwu Black Tortoise appeared. The sword was unable to pierce through its defense that quickly

“This is the mid-tier, earth-grade Berserker Beast Halberd Technique. It's extremely tyrannical and possesses stringent requirements for users that choose to cultivate it. To think that Qin Wentian actually chose such a halberd technique.”

“Senior Jiang changed his swordplay again, now he is using the Starpoint Swordplay.” The spectators saw the swordplay of Jiang Xiu unhurriedly underwent a change, as the swordlight transformed into a brilliance akin to points of astral light, piercing through the spiral defense of the ancient halberd. It was as though as long as there was a gap in the halberd's defense, his attack would be able to reach Qin Wentian.

“Vermillion Bird Stance of the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique.”

The ancient halberd that Qin Wentian wielded also changed its stance. As the Vermillion Bird Stance was utilised, the halberd became exceptionally sharp and incomparably agile, wanting to destroy the points of astral light attack for attack. In that short instance, ringing sounds incessantly rang out. It was unknown how many times they clashed within that moment.

“Such close combat is extremely dangerous. One wrong move could cause paralysis or even death to the loser.”

The spectators saw that the speed of their close combat battle was getting faster and faster. Even without being powered by his cultivation base, the sword of Jiang Xiu was extremely tyrannical. Qin Wentian also didn't lose out that much. Although his moves were not as graceful and beautiful as the sword user, his defense was as tough as a stone, his attack as domineering as a dragon and a tiger. And as the two of them clashed against each other numerous times, the Divine Weapons in their hands shone with a luster, having the potential to kill with every strike.

Since they were not using their Yuan Energy, the victor would be determined by their understanding of the profoundness of their innate techniques.

From the circumstances, the sword of Jiang Xiu unleashed different attacks relentlessly, inching closer and closer. Most of the time, Qin Wentian adopted a defensive posture, and if this were to go on, Qin Wentian would undoubtedly be defeated.

However, Qin Wentian did not share the same thoughts as the spectators. Although for the majority of the time, he was in a defensive position, his stance was as steady as Mount Tai, there were no gaps in his defense. Even under the constant onslaught of the explosive, ever-changing swordplay of Jiang Xiu, Qin Wentian didn't even suffer a single injury.

“Seems like Qin Wentian wasn’t undeserving of his reputation. Although at first glance, he appeared to be the weaker party, his understanding of innate techniques was not as profound as his opponent, but during every critical moment, he was able to avert disaster and counter with a miraculous counterattack.” The elites on the stage understood more compared to the rest of the crowd. There were two reasons why Qin Wentian could be so steady, making no mistakes even when dueling speed against speed.

Firstly, he was exceptionally familiar with his own techniques, able to execute them to the point of perfection.

Secondly, his senses were extremely sharp, able to clearly sense the path of his opponent’s every attack, not missing out on a single one.

“Sword Heart’s Lonely Shadow.”

The swordplay of Jiang Xiu transformed yet again. His whole person was indomitably pressing forwards, and his sword, akin to a lonely shadow, lacerated everything in its path, emanating a chill that gushed forward intently.

Qin Wentian unhesitatingly retreated, causing the crowd to sigh involuntarily. Qin Wentian, no matter what, was still going to be defeated. No one had anticipated that Jiang Xiu had mastered that strike, Sword Heart’s Lonely Shadow to such a level. The sword in his hands moved at the slightest intent of his will. His degree of accuracy and exquisiteness of that attack had already reached the peak, as Qin Wentian’s defense became increasingly flustered.

“You are doomed to be defeated.” In that instant, Jiang Xiu himself seemed akin to a sharp sword, piercing out gracefully.

“Azure Dragon Stance.” Qin Wentian roared in rage, as he stabbed out with the ancient halberd, exuding an aura of dominance. The simplest strike, but yet the strongest attack he could muster.

“Release!” The gaze of Jiang Xiu was as sharp as swords, and the sword in his hand moved according to his will, undergoing 9 transformations in an instant. The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian’s hands was flung out by the impact, and within that space of a single breath, the sword of Jiang Xiu inched closer and closer.

“Qin Wentian, has been defeated.” Upon witnessing this sight, the crowd silently stated in their hearts. The sword of Jiang Xiu could end that battle in an blink of an eye.

The swordplay of Jiang Xiu won because of its ingenuity. As for the halberd, without the infusion of Yuan power, it wasn’t able to unleash its full tyrannical might.

However, at this very instant, the crowd only saw Qin Wentian advancing instead of choosing to retreat. His palm blasted forward, coming into contact directly with the back of that sharp sword of Jiang Xiu, veering the sword away from him.

“Courting death.” Jiang Xiu coldly snorted, as the sword in his

hand swung in a graceful, perfect arc, changing its trajectory and slicing horizontally at Qin Wentian. However, he witnessed the incredibly mysterious movement technique of Qin Wentian saving him. Maintaining the same rhythm as the sword swing, and moving in accordance to it, Qin Wentian avoided that attack. While simultaneously retreating, he extended his other hand, and actually managed to catch hold of the ancient halberd that was flung out of his grasp. All of this took time to describe, but the events happened within the space of a moment.

At this moment, the distance between Jiang Xiu and Qin Wentian was only a feet apart. Jiang Xiu blasted out with his left hand, and Qin Wentian mirrored his actions. At that moment of impact, both of their bodies were instantly forced apart a certain distance. However, during that split-second, the Vermillion Bird Stance of the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique swept out, incomparably swift. The crescent edged blades of that halberd landed on Jiang Xiu's neck, while the sword of Jiang Xiu was still some distance away from Qin Wentian!

AGM 109 – Overbearing

This abrupt change caused the expressions of many to freeze dumbfoundedly, revealing expressions of amazement on their faces. In that instant when the last move by Jiang Xiu swept out, Qin Wentian actually managed to pull off such an incredible movement technique. Even though it was not powered by Yuan Energy, just purely based on his movements alone, it could be said that he had reached the state akin to a fish in water.

What was even more shocking was that he even incorporated a perfect attack directly after; as though everything, including the reactions of his opponent, was pre-planned by him within his mind, ensuring the defeat of Jiang Xiu.

Jiang Xiu's countenance at this moment was extremely unsightly to behold. This exchange without the use of their cultivation bases truly showcased the understanding of one's proficiency in using their innate techniques, as well as their senses and talent. Since he was defeated, it meant that he was not at the level of Qin Wentian. Not only that, his arrogant words and impoliteness from earlier still resounded clearly in the ears of the crowd. This blinding contrast really caused him to lose all face today.

“My cultivation base is shallow, and I only have a slight understanding of a few innate techniques. Maybe my luck is good, hence winning by chance.” Qin Wentian smiled as he spoke to Jiang Xiu, his voice unperturbed. However, it was precisely the calmness of his voice that cause his words to sound extremely sarcastic in Jiang Xiu's ears.

Shallow cultivation base, only knowing a few innate techniques? But the victor was Qin Wentian? Doesn't that mean that he, the great Jiang Xiu, was even worse when compared to him?

Not only that, Qin Wentian still added a 'maybe he was lucky' reasoning at the end of his sentence. Wasn't that also yet another slap in the face of Qiu Mo and Jiang Xiu. Both of them has been deliberately targeting Qin Wentian from the start, and according to their logic, the reason for Qin Wentian's win now should be luck.

Jiang Xiu raised his hands and exerted his strength, forcefully pushing the ancient halberd away from his neck. The immense strength of the push caused Qin Wentian's arms to tremble from the impact.

"Losing by one move, maybe it was luck, or maybe it was because of merely being careless. Both of your understandings are at a high level regarding innate techniques; especially Jiang Xiu, he comprehended the essences and insights of many mighty and mysterious greatsword techniques. If it were not for the restriction of this exchange, in a real battle he would win in merely a few moves. The dominating strength further bolstered by the power of his cultivation base would have long destroyed the pathetic defense of Junior Brother Qin."

It was as if Qiu Mo had long prepared his speech, stepping out to save the day. From a certain viewpoint, his words weren't without sense. Earlier, every attack by Jiang Xiu had the potential to kill, and the restriction of not being allowed to use their cultivation bases caused the power of his sword to diminish greatly. If not,

even if their cultivation bases were at a similar level, Qin Wentian might not have been able to defend against it.

However, from yet another viewpoint, Jiang Xiu was obviously defeated. And despite that, Qiu Mo actually continued defending him, twisting words and obscuring logic.

At this moment, everyone who had eyes were able to tell that Qiu Mo was intentionally targeting Qin Wentian.

“Since the exchange has already concluded, we might as well have a real battle, what does Junior brother Qin thinks about this?” Qiu Mo smiled as he looked to Qin Wentian.

“Oi.” At this moment, a voice rang out within the crowd. Qiu Mo shifted his gaze over, only to see a fatty approaching the stone stage, halting at the steps of it. That figure planted his hands on his hips while looking at him.

“Senior Brother Qiu Mo, if the rankings between the 10 prodigies were to undergo a change, I believe that Senior would surely be ranked first.” The first sentence from the mouth of the fatty caused the crowd to become silent, as expressions of interested appeared on their faces.

Naturally, there were people in the crowd that recognised who this fatty was. The bosom buddy of Qin Wentian, Fan Le.

In the past, Qin Wentian and Fan Le stood together in the arena,

the first time was the killing of Orfon, and the second was facing against Murong Feng and Du Hao. Naturally, there were many that recognised him.

Not only that, the fatty Fan Le's talent was also extremely high. It was only because he kept appearing with Qin Wentian that the brilliance of his talent was masked. Many in the crowd knew that during this period of time, Fatty frequented the Dreamsky Forest, and the speed at which his martial prowess rose... even the word terrifying wasn't sufficient to describe it.

And it was also rumored that Elder Mustang wouldn't usually guide Qin Wentian on his cultivation, but paid strict attention to Fan Le instead. Because, Fan Le was just too lazy.

As for lazy people, of course they would need supervision.

“Why?” Luo Huan laughed as she looked at Fan Le.

“I heard that within the rankings of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital, Senior Qiu Mo was ranked 4th. There's no need to speak about those that ranked behind him, and as for the three people ranked in front of him, if they were to fight against Senior Qiu Mo, they might also not win for certain. Even if they won, they definitely must have depended on luck, and thus the result wouldn't be accurate. Not only that, they surely achieved their current cultivation base through many fortuitous and miraculous encounters, how could they be compared to Senior Qiu Mo, whose cultivation was obtained purely through hard work? Only Senior

brother Qiu Mo deserves to be the undisputed number one, breaking into Yuanfu based on his own efforts. Who would dare to compare themselves with him?”

Fan Le spoke frankly with assurance, causing people to be stunned. This fellow... was speaking nonsense with a straight face. But still, the crowd naturally understood the meaning of Fan Le’s words.

“What logic is this?” Qiu Mo furrowed his brows. Naturally, he could feel the sarcasm behind the words of Fatty.

“You brushed it off as a fortuitous event, doubting the fact that Qin Wentian could create 3rd level Divine Inscriptions – obtaining the imprints by luck instead of his own creation. He only used the span of a year to reach the 6th level of Arterial Circulation, but you said that he was a fallen genius and wouldn’t be able to step into Yuanfu. He agreed to your proposal to have an exchange against Jiang Xiu and won, yet you refuted, saying that it was due to luck and carelessness of his opponent. Afterwards, you conveniently forgot that originally, their spar was supposed to be this way, without the use of their cultivation base – but after that you still shamelessly proposed a real battle. How amazing.”

Fan Le laughed as he spoke, looking at Qiu Mo. “In the entire Emperor Star Academy, only Senior Qiu Mo depended on his own efforts to achieve the cultivation base he has today. All the rest can only depend on miraculous events or fortuitous encounters to break through to Yuanfu. I don’t really understand Senior Qiu’s logic, where did he get his self-confidence from? But i know this for sure: if we were to compare the level of shamelessness, Senior

Qiu Mo would definitely be ranked as the first among the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital.”

After he finish his speech, Fan Le even pretentiously bowed in the direction of Qiu Mo. This level of sarcasm was so high that it was indescribable, and it caused the expression on Qiu Mo face to turn extremely ugly to behold.

“A win is a win, a loss is a loss. Qin Wentian’s mastery of his innate techniques surpassed that of Jiang Xiu, how can it be brushed off as luck? Obviously Jiang Xiu was not proficient enough. Since he was defeated, he should accept it with a big heart and learn from his mistakes.” Luo Cheng also involuntarily spoke out, as he couldn’t bear it anymore. It was not that he was helping Qin Wentian, but he was just acting in line to his personality.

The word was out on the street that Qin Wentian had enmity with Luo Qianqiu. As a person that hailed from the Asura Faction, Luo Cheng naturally wouldn’t intentionally help Qin Wentian. It was just that he couldn’t take it anymore either.

“If Jiang Xiu of the 10 prodigies could defeat Qin Wentian because of his higher cultivation base, is there anything to be proud of?” Luo Cheng was very direct, but to Jiang Xiu, it was undoubtedly a provocation filled with sarcasm.

“It seems as though after you made some progress in your cultivation, you actually dared to dream about stealing my position in the rankings of the 10 prodigies. If you really wish for it, there’s no need to wait for the Jun Lin Banquet. Today, I can give you a chance.” Jiang Xiu’s eyes were directed at Luo Cheng. His gaze was

akin to swords, incomparably sharp. Although he was ranked last among the 10 prodigies, this ranking was given to him last year. After a year, he has already broken through to the peak level of Arterial Circulation, and had wanted to advance his ranking.

“What do I have to fear?” Luo Cheng’s countenance remained unchanged as he calmly spoke. He wasn’t like Jiang Xiu, who put too much emphasis on victory or defeat. His purpose of attending the Jun Lin Banquet was solely because he wanted to temper himself. It would be an added bonus if he were to rank among the first few places. However, if he could not, it wasn’t a bad thing either as his martial prowess would surely increase.

Since this time Jiang Xiu wanted to bring forward the battle date, why not?

“Fine, wait for me. Before our battle, I will personally teach Junior Brother Qin how to respect his seniors.” The gaze of Jiang Xiu shifted, as he stared at Qin Wentian again. At this moment, the sword in his hands shone with a blinding light, even colder and sharper when compared to earlier. Very obviously, this time round, Jiang Xiu infused his divine weapon with his Astral Yuan Energy.

Qin Wentian was speechless, from the beginning to the end, it has always been Qiu Mo and Jiang Xiu deliberately setting themselves against him. But now, Jiang Xiu actually still wanted to teach him how to ‘respect’ his seniors?

Simply putting, it was still what Qin Wentian had said earlier. Regardless of Qiu Mo or Jiang Xiu, the reason why they dared to be

so overbearing was because they were currently stronger than Qin Wentian.

Pu..... A cold ray of swordlight as bright as the shining constellations pierced towards Qin Wentian.

The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's hands danced in response, as a Xuanwu Black Tortoise manifested again, while the sword light relentlessly stabbed at it, trying to break down his defense.

The sword moved like a graceful swan. This sword strike of his contained no technique, but rather was a direct stab. As the sound of the sword piercing through the air rang out, the Xuanwu Black Tortoise crumbled into pieces, the defense of the Xuanwu Stance was actually broken by the sword of Jiang Xiu! The cultivation base of Jiang Xiu was the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, while Qin Wentian was merely at the 6th. The disparity was too great, the Astral Energy transmitted through the 9 arterial circular pathways augmented the sword technique of Jiang Xiu's exponentially, his attacks were naturally overwhelmingly tyrannical.

Qin Wentian's silhouette was like a leaf drifting about in the wind, his steps incredibly exquisite, dodging the attack with ease.

"The Nine Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique." At this moment, the spectators realised which movement technique Qin Wentian was using, as they revealed expressions of awe on their faces. Qin Wentian actually chose to cultivate a technique of such immense difficulty. Not only that, his level of mastery was actually at such an incredible stage, his whole person was akin to a real

Garuda.

Jiang Xiu continually stabbed out two swords, but didn't manage to hit his opponent. How could he lose his pride like this? His body flickered into motion as sword light flashed again – Sword Heart's Lonely Shadow! In that instant, his whole person seemed to have become a sword, transforming into a phantom, while the mirage of a raging tornado of swords appeared on the stage.

Qin Wentian's expression froze, as he executed the Xuanwu Stance once again to its utmost limit, but only to see it be broken by the sword technique again. This time, as the Xuanwu Manifestation exploded, a huge tear caused by the Sword Qi of Jiang Xiu could be seen on the robes of Qin Wentian.

“How shameless.” Luo Huan coldly snorted, as abruptly, the shadow of a whip appeared in midair. It was as though a thread of blinding light descended from the skies.

Jiang Xiu froze as his sword light transformed, piercing through the void, coming into contact with the long whip of Luo Huan.

Peesh. A crisp noise rang out, as the long whip danced around the sword with a movement akin to a python, coiling around the body of Jiang Xiu.

Jiang Xiu furrowed his brows, he didn't realise that Luo Huan's strength was at such a level. It seemed like during this past year, none of the elites had wasted their time.

A cold light flickered in the eyes of Qin Wentian, who was standing by the side. Jiang Xiu had pushed him to such an extent, torn off the mask of mock politeness, and completely disregarded decorum. Why would he bother holding back?

AGM 110 – Dumbo

Qin Wentian clutched the ancient halberd in his hands tightly as he infused his astral energy within it, staring at the battle between Luo Huan and Jiang Xiu.

An inch longer equates to an inch of more danger. Senior Luo Huan's long whip danced about like wind and clouds, while Jiang Xiu's swordplay remained incomparably exquisite despite the fact that he was forced into defense. Only upon seeing this did Qin Wentian realised that, that day when he had trained with Luo Huan, she hadn't exerted her real strength.

Just then, the shadows of her long whip filled the sky. Every time it lashed out, a thunderous sound akin to the howl of a demon could be heard.

Qin Wentian slowly walked forwards, and he transformed into a blur of shadows. The spectators only saw a blurry silhouette soaring up to the skies, shooting upwards with the speed of a meteor before finally appearing in the space above Jiang Xiu.

“Buzz.” As the wind billowed wildly, Astral Light coalesced into the form of garuda wings appeared on Qin Wentian's back, and he saw that the ancient halberd in his hand was pointing directly at Jiang Xiu below. With a howl of rage, and a pressure akin to that of a mountain, Qin Wentian executed the Green Dragon Stance as the ancient halberd instantly appeared an inch away from Jiang Xiu's head, causing his countenance to turn bloodlessly pale.

“Despicable.” Jiang Xiu slashed out with his sword, wanting to use his sword light to intercept Qin Wentian’s attack. However, the tyranny of the ancient halberd was boundless, the power behind its attack as heavy as a mountain. As it bore forward heavily on Jiang Xiu’s sword, the sword broke into pieces, unable to ever be used again.

“Pa.....” A tearing sound rang out as Jiang Xiu’s robes were lacerated. Blood flowed like a fountain as the wound of a whiplash could be clearly seen on his chest. Instantaneously, he was flung away by the impact, and he slammed heavily onto the ground. In addition, his shattered sword fragments also scattered about him like a gentle rain.

Although all this took time to describe, everything happened in an instant. The expressions of the crowd froze, as weird and puzzled looks were exchanged. Jiang Xiu of the 10 prodigies had actually been defeated and humiliated to such an extent. This was really a rare piece of news for the Emperor Star Academy.

“Audacious.” Qiu Mo roared in anger, as Yuanfu pressure began emanating forth from his body. Luo Huan stepped in front of Qin Wentian as she stated, “Don’t tell me Senior Qiu Mo wants to use his Yuanfu cultivation base to bully me and junior brother Qin?”

At this moment, Jiang Xiu picked himself up from the ground, as a monstrous sword-intent gushed out. His expression couldn’t be more ugly.

As one of the 10 prodigies, he had actually lost in front of a crowd. To him, this was an extreme humiliation.

Everyone in the crowd witnessed what has happened. If he did not wash clean this shame, how could he have the face to look others in the eye in the future?

“You guys actually went 2-on-1, and even did a sneak attack.” Qiu Mo coldly snorted as he took a step forward. The pressure released by his immense Yuanfu aura, bore down on Luo Huan and Qin Wentian. This pressure was incredibly powerful. The disparity between the Yuanfu Realm and the Arterial Circulation was light years away.

“Jiang Xiu, a genius of the Emperor Star Academy with the status of one of the 10 prodigies, while Junior brother Qin is a mere new student. Earlier when Jiang Xiu made his move against Junior brother Qin, I didn’t see Senior Qiu Mo stepping out to stop him.” Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes stared at Qiu Mo as she continued, “Besides, you can’t tell me that Jiang Xiu actually feels threatened by Junior brother Qin’s 6th level of Arterial Circulation? The 10 prodigies shouldn’t be so weak right? With a gap of 3 levels between them, shouldn’t Jiang Xiu still be able to freely ignore Junior brother Qin’s attack and still have no harm done to him?”

Luo Huan didn’t forget to humiliate Jiang Xiu with her words, and Jiang Xiu’s expression got uglier and uglier.

Indeed, Jiang Xiu, as one of the 10 prodigies and with a cultivation base at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, should by right not be at all threatened by Qin Wentian’s cultivation base at the 6th level. Unless, of course, he was suppressed by the Qin Wentian’s martial prowess .

“Qiu Mo, their battle has nothing to do with you.” At this moment, the sound of Luo Cheng’s voice drifted over. Qiu Mo shifted his gaze, and the light of a cold anger could be seen smouldering in the depths of his eyes.

“Since you’ve already broken through to Yuanfu, you should go look for those Yuanfu Seniors and spar against them. Who do you think you are, acting like a hero here?” Luo Cheng didn’t leave a shred of face of Qiu Mo as he continued. “Moreover, this was a battle Jiang Xiu proposed on his own. If he is still a man, he should settle it himself. Otherwise, the name of the 10 prodigies would all be thrown away by Jiang Xiu, even needing help from others to fight his own battles.”

“The end of the year approaches. After the Jun Lin Banquet ends, the name of Jiang Xiu will never appear within the ranks of the 10 prodigies ever again.”

The voice of Luo Cheng was calm, as though he was speaking about an extremely ordinary thing; However, the content of his words caused the other elites on stage to nod in agreement.

The Jun Lin Banquet that was held every year would result in a change of ranking among the 10 prodigies. Naturally, this year would not be an exception. Luo Cheng spoke bluntly; not only would Jiang Xiu no longer advance within the ranks of the 10 prodigies, he would on the contrary, be totally removed from it, surpassed by others.

“The two of you can come at me together.” Jiang Xiu raged as he released his Sword-type Astral Soul.

His pupils were akin to swords as he glared at Luo Huan and Qin Wentian. At this moment, on his chest, one could see his lacerated flesh, slightly blocked by his clothing that was dyed red with his blood. Jiang Xiu currently was at his boiling point.

As the sound of his voice faded, he took another step forward. The sword Qi howled, and a ray of sword light could be seen slashing out towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian pierced forwards with the ancient halberd as the faint shadow of the Xuanwu Tortoise materialised. The sword slash’s arrival caused the manifestation to crumble as Qin Wentian felt a wave of terrifyingly sharp pressure gushing forth towards him.

“You overestimate yourself.” Luo Huan coldly snorted as anger flashed in her eyes. At the same time she released her Astral Soul, the long whip in her hand also lashed out in attack. It was as though the whole sky was covered with a storm of attacks, as the shadow of her whip devoured space, suppressing the attacking sword light.

At this moment, expressions of surprises appeared on the faces of the crowd. So in actuality, Luo Huan was this strong? Even without Qin Wentian, Luo Huan alone would have already been sufficient to suppress Jiang Xiu.

“Truly a sad case of overestimating your own abilities. Can’t you see that Luo Huan’s power level has already surpassed yours?” Luo Cheng exclaimed, disdain evident in his eyes as he saw Jiang Xiu preparing another attack. Jiang Xiu was ranked as the 10th prodigy during the Banquet last year. It seems as though the competitors last year had been weaklings, and that was how he had obtained his ranking. However, this year was different; the competition between elites would be many times more intense.

Luo Huan did indeed possess the qualifications to fight for the position if she chose to do so. Not only that, he himself also wanted to fight for it. Furthermore, he understood that the martial prowess of Luo Qianqiu, was definitely stronger than his. Soon after Luo Qianqiu had stepped into the 8th level, he’d entered into self-seclusion again. There was only a single target Luo Qianqiu was aiming for – the first position in the Jun Lin Banquet. During the banquet at the end of the year, there would be no Yuanfu cultivators. How many of those in Arterial Circulation could defeat Luo Qianqiu by then?

Qin Wentian didn’t strike again. Instead, he sarcastically remarked, “10 prodigies? Even if it was the 15 prodigies, Jiang Xiu, you still wouldn’t have the qualifications to be part of it.”

As Jiang Xiu got increasingly infuriated from these words, his swordplay started to be affected. From the surface, it seemed as though its had power increased, but it was obvious he had no way to sustain it. As for Luo Huan, the dance of her whip interweaved through the air perfectly, forming a net so tight that even wind and rain wouldn’t be able to pass through it.

Luo Huan's lithe figure danced about gracefully. Many began fantasising how good would it be if they could become her man.

However, all of them knew that even though Luo Huan looked 'easy' and flirted constantly, there hadn't been a single man that had successfully wooed her before.

And at this moment, the sound of a bird call drifted over from the far horizons. As everyone's gazes turned towards that direction, expressions of shock and surprise could be seen on their faces. Who in the world actually dared to ride a flying beast as their steed in the Emperor Star Academy?

And as the sound of the bird call got nearer and nearer, the crowd's eyes rested upon the beautiful silhouette mounted atop of that white crane in the distance.

“Mo Qingcheng.”

Many males in the crowd gazed at her silhouette with their mouths wide open, seemingly having already forgotten the intense battle that was occurring between Jiang Xiu and Luo Huan.

Far away in the distance, the lady clad in white atop the white crane was akin to a celestial maiden. Her beautiful face, coupled together with the white crane and her attire, made her seem like an angel had descended from the heavens and was flying towards the crowd. In the distance,

As in comparison to Mo Qingcheng, Nolan, who was beside her, could only serve the purpose of a backdrop, forgotten by others. It wasn't that Nolan wasn't beautiful, but when being in such a close proximity to Mo Qingcheng, her looks were totally suppressed.

There were so many ravishing women in the Chu Country, but no matter how many beauties there were, none could hold a candle to Mo Qingcheng.

“How beautiful.” Qin Yao also involuntarily praised her. She thought of the words Luo Huan had spoken previously, that Qin Wentian may end up together with Mo Qingcheng. Wouldn't that be a perfect union?

Very quickly, the white crane neared the spectators, hovering in the air.

“Mo Qingcheng also seems to be interested in observing the battle.” Some people commented as they saw the eyes of Mo Qingcheng glancing over at them.

Qiu Mo shot a look at the white crane hovering in the air. As he gazed at the beautiful silhouette, a warm look and gentle smile appeared on his face, causing him to appear extremely approachable.

“Why is she here as well?” Qin Wentian displayed a puzzled expression. Everytime he looked at Mo Qingcheng, he would feel the strings of his hearts being stirred. As a young, hot-blooded male, it was extremely difficult for any to maintain their calmness

in front of Mo Qingcheng's absolute beauty – a beauty that was even capable of toppling empires. After all, their cultivation levels weren't sufficient for them to be at the 'heart like still water' state.

Descending from the white crane in a graceful somersault, the two beautiful girls landed on to the ground, attracting everyone's attentions. The exciting battle between Luo Huan and Jiang Xiu was thrown to the back of their minds, forgotten in the face of absolute beauty.

"Qingcheng, why are you here today?" Qiu Mo walked forward as he smiled at Mo Qingcheng.

"Oi, oi, Qiu Mo, since when was Qingcheng so familiar with you? Please show some respect when you are talking to her." Nolan glared at Qiu Mo, causing an expression of awkwardness to be displayed on his face. But swiftly after, a gentle smile appeared as he recovered.

Mo Qingcheng didn't pay any mind to Qiu Mo, only glancing at him casually. However, Qiu Mo had already anticipated her response. It wasn't just him, Mo Qingcheng couldn't be bothered with most of the members of the 10 prodigies.

However, as he saw Mo Qingcheng walking towards Qin Wentian, Qiu Mo's expression slightly changed as a dangerous glint of cold light flickered in his eyes.

Rumours had it that during the banquet hosted by Chu Tianjiao earlier, Mo Qingcheng's treatment of Qin Wentian was way

different from how she treated the others. Didn't that mean that the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital weren't comparable to Qin Wentian? Did Mo Qingcheng, the number one beauty of Chu, really have such a good relationship with Qin Wentian?

Just thinking of this caused the unhappiness and irritation in his heart to surge wildly, silently cursing the dogsh*t luck of Qin Wentian. He'd gotten so many 3rd level divine imprints, as well as obtained Mo Qingcheng's approval.

"Dumbo." Mo Qingcheng called out to Qin Wentian as a light smile painted her face. Every time she looked at the expression on Qin Wentian's face, she couldn't help but feel that this fellow was slightly dumb in an adorable way.

"Hmm....." Qin Wentian blinked. Dumbo?

Involuntarily, he thought of that day he'd spent with Mo Qingcheng, gazing at the beautiful falling snow. Smiling bitterly, he thought to himself, was he really a dumbo?

At this moment, Qin Wentian could feel numerous gazes filled with enmity pointed at him. Qiu Mo was the same as well, causing Qin Wentian to feel slightly marvelous.

Could the deliberate targeting of him by Qiu Mo be because of Mo Qingcheng?

AGM 111 – Riding Crane

The position of Mo Qingcheng within the Emperor Star Academy was different from the other students. Even though she did not pass the required examination to be enrolled in the academy, she still often appear within the grounds of the academy.

Not only that, she had an Emperor Jade Medallion as well, and could enjoy the resources that was extended to students of the academy. In addition, it was rumored that almost all of the older and esteemed elders of the academy were acquainted with her.

It was only within recent years that the presence of Mo Qingcheng in the Emperor Star Academy became lesser and lesser. Maybe it was because her strength had gradually increased. And as for what cultivation base Mo Qingcheng had, not many people were clear about her true level of power. But despite this, there were many who guessed that if Mo Qingcheng displayed her true strength, she would most definitely be ranked within the 10 prodigies.

Not only so, Mo Qingcheng, was definitely the dream girl of many males in the Royal Capital. The news about several members of the 10 prodigies trying to woo her was also not a secret, it was just that Mo Qingcheng couldn't be bothered with them.

At this moment, Mo Qingcheng ignored Qiu Mo, but called Qin Wentian a dumbo instead. This scene caused many in the crowd to stiffen and turn stonelike, standing unmoving at their original spot.

‘Dumbo’ seemed like a term of endearment, it was as though both parties had an extremely close relationship.

Even Nolan was somewhat jealous of Qin Wentian. The luck of this fellow was really too good, from the time she had known her to the the first time Mo Qingcheng met the unconscious Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng had never treated any male that nicely before. Maybe it was fate, or maybe it had something to do with the past relationship between the Mo Clan and the Qin Clan.

“Miss Mo, why are you here?” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Why can’t I be here?” Mo Qingcheng had an adorable look upon her face, dazzling the eyes of those who were gazing at her.

“And just calling me Qingcheng would do.” Mo Qingcheng gently smiled.

At this moment, the gazes of the crowd were filled with intense envy and jealousy. If Mo Qingcheng spoke this way to them, how marvelous would it be.....

The warm smile on Qiu Mo’s face disappeared instantly, as his countenance transformed into something extremely ugly to behold. Earlier when he called out the words ‘Qingcheng’, he was ignored. Not only that, Nolan also said that he had overstepped his bounds, and he had better put some respect into his words.

But yet, just moments ago, Mo Qingcheng actually personally

told Qin Wentian to just call her Qingcheng?

This difference in treatment felt like a slap directly on the face of Qiu Mo.

“Qin Wentian.” Qiu Mo gritted his teeth. He naturally did not dare to harbor any ill intentions towards Mo Qingcheng, and thus, he transferred all his jealousy and rage onto Qin Wentian. What qualifications did Qin Wentian actually have? Not only was he favored by the Emperor Star Academy, and was protected by their will, he even obtained the approval of Mo Qingcheng.

“Qingcheng.” Qin Wentian smiled as he called out, only to see a radiant smile blossoming on the face of the young lady in front of him. His heartbeat involuntarily quickened, as he felt small traces of nervousness from the butterflies in his stomach.

Drawing in a deep breath, Qin Wentian calmed his heart, silently scolding himself that his will was not strong enough. How could he lose his self-control upon meeting a pretty girl?

However, he did not know how many males in the crowd currently would want to be in his position.

“Smelly brat, tossing your senior aside the moment you meet your little lover.” A voice drifted over from the side, causing Qin Wentian’s eyes to flicker, as an expression of surprise flashed on his face.

As he turned his gaze over, Qin Wentian realised that the duel between Luo Huan and Jiang Xiu had stopped.

Laughing loudly, Luo Huan regarded both Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng, the warmth in her eyes was obvious, and her words caused Qin Wentian to be extremely embarrassed.

A faint tinge of redness could also be seen on Mo Qingcheng's beautiful countenance. A beauty that was capable of toppling empires, the look on Mo Qingcheng's face caused everyone below to be stunned. Their dream goddess actually display such an expression of shyness. But what made them depressed was that Mo Qingcheng only displayed such an expression after hearing the words of Luo Huan.

Not only that, she didn't refute the claim.

"It's over. Mo Qingcheng, she wouldn't be interested in Qin Wentian right?" The crowd was completely dumbfounded, while they became increasingly jealous of Qin Wentian.

"Senior Sister, what are you doing?" Qin Wentian mumbled, speechless. Luo Huan's words were too misleading, and somewhat too direct.

Surreptitiously glancing at Mo Qingcheng, and upon realising the expression of shyness on her face, Qin Wentian's heartbeat quickened yet again.

"Is there anything wrong with what I say? The number one beauty of Chu, if the two of you were together, wouldn't it be

perfect? Why are you not working hard to woo her? Or could it be that you guys are already together?” Luo Huan’ blinked her beautiful eyes, as Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng became increasingly embarrassed.

“Pei, Pei, Pei. How could this fellow match up to Mo Qingcheng?” Nolan strode to the side of Mo Qingcheng as she unhappily stated. If the suitors of Mo Qingcheng were to line up, that line would extend all the way out of the Royal Capital. How could they allow this little fellow to get lucky? Absolutely no way in hell.

(TN Note: Pei = sound of spitting)

“What do you mean he can’t match up? A 17 year old, 3rd level divine inscriptionist, first in the history of Chu. Not only that, my junior brother is young and handsome, and will definitely surpass the 10 prodigies in the future. He and Mo Qingcheng are a match made in heaven.” Luo Huan spoke as if she intentionally wanted to matchmake them, laughing as she stated.

“Impossible,” Nolan angrily refuted. The bickering between these two beauties caused Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to be flabbergasted.

Wasn’t this a sign that the whole world would be in chaos?

“What are the both you saying?” Mo Qingcheng felt slightly depressed. Gazing at Qin Wentian, she stated, “Grandpa said that the Astral River Hall would be opened to the students today. Let’s go together and ignore them.”

“The opening of Astral River Hall?”

The faces of everyone froze. The three important places for cultivation in the Emperor Star Academy.

The first, Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Second, Astral River Hall.

Third, Dreamsky Forest.

The Heavenly Star Pavilion and the Astral River Hall both required a leveled up Emperor Jade Medallion before one could access it. Especially the Heavenly River Pavilion. Within it was stored a plethora of innate techniques and cultivation arts, and thus there was a need to monitor the access strictly.

It was the same for the Astral River Hall, one's access was determined by the level of one's medallion. For example, a 3rd level medallion would grant access to the 3rd level. Naturally, it also depended if that cultivator had sufficient abilities to withstand the pressure in there.

However, there was one aspect in which the Astral River Hall differed compared to the Heavenly Star Pavilion. The Astral River Hall only allowed access to students once a year.

And this time round for the students of Emperor Star Academy, as long as you had the ability, no matter how high you wanted to go, the Emperor Star Academy wouldn't stop you.

Many speculated that the reason for this this was because of the grand Jun Lin Banquet coming up at the end of the year. After all, the Emperor Star Academy would send many students to attend, and as the number one martial academy in the Chu Country, it wouldn't look good if the students sent by the Emperor Star Academy were too weak.

Today, the Astral River Hall was open to all. This was a rare opportunity for students with great affinity but lacking in Yuan Meteor Stones.

“Astral River Hall?” Qin Wentian naturally had heard of it before. It was only because just based on his own affinity, he was already able to traverse up to the 5th Heavenly Layer. That was why during this past year, he didn't choose to go there. But since there was a chance knocking on his door, he might as well grab it and go take a look.

“Okay.”

Qin Wentian nodded his head, and mounted the white crane together with Mo Qingcheng. With a flap of its great wings, the white crane soared up in the sky.

“The two of you.....” Nolan stomped her foot on the ground upon witnessing what just happened. Gazing angrily at the back of

Mo Qingcheng who was getting further and further away, Nolan silently scolded, “Idiotic girl, choosing a guy over your friend. I will deal with you when I see you again.”

On the other hand, Luo Huan was laughing happily.

“Boss, why didn’t you bring me along?” Fan Le stretched his hands out in the air, as he grumbled depressedly. The two of them were supposed to be brothers, weren’t they going to share wealth and woe together?

But still, that little fellow seemed to be truly lucky with beauties. Earlier, Qin Wentian had already explained the misunderstanding that happened back then in the Dark Forest, and that Mo Qingcheng had actually apologised to him in that banquet hosted by Chu Tianjiao. Fan Le naturally would not blame Mo Qingcheng for that misunderstanding that happened earlier.

Qiu Mo had an ashen look on his face, as he stared blankly at the silhouette of the flying crane.

Mo Qingcheng actually invited Qin Wentian to fly on her mount with her. What was this treatment? There was never any male that enjoyed such a treatment by Mo Qingcheng ever.

“I know that you deliberately targeted Junior Brother Qin because of Mo Qingcheng. But how laughable was it that Mo Qingcheng didn’t even know who Qiu Mo is? And on the contrary, didn’t you see what her relationship with Junior brother Qin was like? I truly don’t know what’s praiseworthy about you stepping

into Yuanfu. Even if you are a Yuanfu cultivator, Mo Qingcheng won't be bothered about you all the same."

Luo Huan didn't forget to shoot Qiu Mo when he was down. That arrogance of Qiu Mo earlier still grated on her nerves. Now that she had the chance to stub his pride, she wouldn't be polite.

"And as for you, the 10th ranked among the 10 prodigies? After the banquet, you will never see your name appear in the rankings of the 10 prodigies again." Luo Huan cast a glance at Jiang Xiu. There was no clear victor during their duel earlier.

"See you at the Astral River Hall." Jiang Xiu coldly snorted as he walked away in the direction of the Astral River Hall.

Qiu Mo snorted as well, as he soared in the air, flying in the direction of the Astral River Hall.

The elites on the stage also made their way over to there.

Elites were all competitive in nature. Since the Astral River Hall was going to be opened today, those elites with stronger talents would naturally wish to see who could climb the highest.

Very quickly, everyone in the crowd vacated the area and departed for the Astral River Hall.

Today, he was ignored as though he was transparent while Qin Wentian obtained the favor of Mo Qingcheng. How could Qiu Mo

take this humiliation lying down so easily? He would definitely make Qin Wentian pay, should they meet again in the Astral River Hall.

AGM 112 – Dangerous Orchon

There were already many people gathered outside the Astral River Hall.. Not only that, there were also some students with extraordinary talent that had obtained the approval of the elders already waiting there.

At the same time, the news about the opening was also being spread to every corner of the Emperor Star Academy. And swiftly after, all the students gradually knew about this.

The white crane flapped its wings slowly, hovering in the skies, surveying the entire Emperor Star Academy before it descended.

On top of the white crane, there were two silhouettes. The male was young and handsome, while the female was a beauty capable of toppling empires. This involuntarily caused those that witnessed this sight to praise them as a perfect couple.

However, there were also several that had negative emotions. Envy, jealousy, malice, resentment were all among them.

The crowd naturally recognised the two silhouettes sitting on the white crane. Qin Wentian, as well as the number one beauty of Chu, Mo Qingcheng.

It seemed like the rumors about Mo Qingcheng having a close relationship with Qin Wentian were real. Seeing both of them sitting together atop the white crane of Mo Qingcheng undoubtedly caused Qin Wentian to become the focal point of

attention once again. Not only that, this time round, he was standing right in the heart where the wind and waves were the strongest.

Qin Wentian felt the weight of the stares and glares riveted on him, and he couldn't help but smile as he cast a glance at Mo Qingcheng beside him. "This time round, I'm really going to be so dead because of you."

Mo Qingcheng gazed at Qin Wentian, as an adorable smile appeared on her face. With a single hand propping up her chin, she laughed, "Why? Don't tell me you're not willing to seat here with me."

"How can it be, with a beautiful lady as my companion, my heart is warmed. Moreover, it's a delight to my eyes." Qin Wentian smiled as he replied.

"So, the dumbo also has moments where he is not as dumb." Mo Qingcheng's radiant smile almost caused Qin Wentian to lose his focus. Silently, he stated in his heart, femme fatale.

Ever since the beginning of time, beautiful women had always been sought after by others. Naturally, conflicts and competition would occur between those who wanted to woo the women of their desires. Thus the term, Femme Fatale.

Only now did Qin Wentian fully comprehend the meaning behind the two words. He hadn't yet claimed the beauty as his own, but just a closer relationship with Mo Qingcheng already

brought him an immense amount of hatred.

“Have you entered the Astral River Hall before?” Mo Qingcheng asked in a gentle voice as she gazed at the great hall before them.

“No, but I’ve heard that the Astral River Hall can mimic the astral pressure of the Nine Heavenly Layers. It was training for cultivators that wanted to condense an Astral Soul from the higher Heavenly Layers. Hence, I have never been in here before.” Qin Wentian replied.

“Dumbo, you are not modest at all.” Mo Qingcheng smiled. From his reply, Mo Qingcheng could infer that Qin Wentian was saying he temporarily did not need to use the Astral River Hall to help him condense Astral Souls from a higher Heavenly Layer.

“I have a name, okay?” Qin Wentian looked at Mo Qingcheng as he stated this. When had he become ‘dumbo’?

“I shall still refer to you as dumbo. Why? Do you have any objections?” Mo Qingcheng planted her hands on her hips, glaring at Qin Wentian as mock anger could be seen on her face. This anger also contained a hint of mischief, stirring Qin Wentian’s heart. When a woman’s beauty exceeded a certain limit, each and every one of her movements would cause people’s hearts to palpitate wildly.

“You win.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders, utterly defeated.

A victorious expression appeared on the countenance of Mo Qingcheng as she laughed, “Not only does the Astral River Hall emulate the pressure of the Nine Heavenly Layers, there is also a mysterious profound theory hidden in there that few can decipher.”

A strange glow lit up in Qin Wentian eyes. This was something he had not known before. But since Mo Qingcheng’s maternal grandfather was his Grand Teacher, what she said shouldn’t be wrong. The Astral River Hall shouldn’t merely be so simple as emulating the astral pressure felt in the higher Heavenly Layers.

The people gathered outside the Astral River Hall increased, and many teachers of the academy were also present. They stood in front of the Astral River Hall as they regarded the students gathered there.

It was unknown if there would be any talents that was able to step into the higher levels of the Astral River Hall this time round.

Qiu Mo, Jiang Xiu, Luo Huan, Luo Cheng and the rest also arrived. They were standing outside the Astral River Hall, gazing at the white crane soaring in the skies.

An extremely cold glint of light could be seen flickering in Qiu Mo’s eyes. That earlier amiable and approachable demeanor had disappeared totally, and only intense jealousy, rage, and vengeance remained. His original plan to humiliate Qin Wentian had failed at the Emperor Star Monuments, and he had even been counter-humiliated by a junior.

What was even tougher for him to accept was the disregard Mo Qingcheng had towards him, as well as the totally opposite treatment she had shown towards Qin Wentian. This obvious contrast in treatment has already caused him to lose all his face.

Jiang Xiu, likewise, was also feeling terrible.

However, the two silhouettes sitting atop the white crane didn't even bother to glance in the direction of these two people. Mo Qingcheng didn't even know much about the two of them. She only knew of their existence.

Despite the fact that both of them were part of the 10 prodigies, Qin Wentian didn't place that much regard upon the two of them.

"Idiotic girl, you actually chose him over me." Nolan stood below with her hands planted on her hips, shouting at the white crane hovering in the skies.

Mo Qingcheng had a mischievous expression on her face as she regarded Nolan standing below. "Nolan, be careful of what you say; if not I won't send you back later."

"If you won't send me, then don't. How dare you threaten me!" Nolan angrily replied. This girl had actually forsaken her for Qin Wentian, how could she not be infuriated?

"You should stop yelling, Mo Qingcheng will become the wife of

my junior brother Qin sooner or later. At that time, you will become an outsider.” Luo Huan laughed loudly, seemingly wishing for the whole world to be in chaos. Momentarily, flames could be seen spitting out of Nolan’s eyes as she glared at Luo Huan, “A mere smelly little brat wanting to marry Qingcheng? No way.”

“As long as they are both willing, it’s fine. You are not the one he is marrying anyway.”

How could Nolan win the war of words between her and Luo Huan? Nolan was already speechless. After only a few exchanges, her face had already turned red from suppressed anger. However, the words of Luo Huan caused the surrounding crowd to be stunned.

The number one beauty of Chu and Qin Wentian were actually mutual lovebirds? When had this happened?

“Your senior sister, her words are too.....” On top of the white crane, Mo Qingcheng didn’t know whether to laugh or be offended as she glanced at Qin Wentian. Although she treated Qin Wentian as a good friend, her feelings for him had not reached the level of a couple.

“You should understand the personality of senior sister Luo Huan, this is her usual character.” Qin Wentian was also speechless. Luo Huan was incurring hatred for him, he could feel the gazes of the crowd below getting colder and colder.

Luo Huan evidently didn’t feel like this. She was smiling as she

gazed at Qin Wentian atop the white crane, thinking in her heart. “Smelly brat, your senior sister is campaigning for you, helping you to stake your claims on her. After this, it’s all up to you now.”

Janus, at this moment, was also standing in front of the entrance to the Astral River Hall. When he shifted his gaze onto the white crane flying in the air, a cold light could be seen in his eyes.

“The dog-shit luck of that little bastard.” A baleful air could be felt emanating from him. He naturally had reasons to hate Qin Wentian. Even before Qin Wentian had enrolled in the academy, he had already formed grudges with Qin Wentian. But to think that despite him silently adding pressure, Qin Wentian’s situation had actually gotten better and better, to the point where he’d obtained the recognition of the Emperor Academy. The current Janus had no face to speak of among all the Elders.

He had also never forgotten the threat that Qin Wentian had made. “Since today I can kill him, similarly, I can kill you in just a few years. If you have the guts, either you kill me right now, or f*ck off and stop bothering me.”

“Teacher.” At this moment, a silhouette approached Janus and called out to him.

“Orchon, work hard. Maybe you will step into Yuanfu in the coming year. Treat the entry into the Astral River Hall seriously, this could serve as preparation for when you condense your 3rd Astral Soul in the future.” Janus instructed.

“Your student understands.” Orchon nodded, as a sharp light flickered in his eyes. Compared to the past, his aura was now several times colder, as well as many times sharper, emitting a sense of danger to those that saw him.

“Not bad, you are almost ready to attempt your breakthrough to Yuanfu.” Another Elder that had good relations with Janus praised Orchon as he nodded.

Those standing in the crowd paid close attention to Orchon. Orchon had disappeared from the Emperor Star Academy for a period of time, and had supposedly been training himself arduously for the Jun Lin Banquet, breaking through to Yuanfu.

Orchon turned, and walked towards the crowd. He directed a sharp glance filled with killing intent at the white crane in the air, towards Qin Wentian. Despite the distance, Qin Wentian clearly felt that coldness of that killing intent within Orchon’s sharp gaze.

The countenance of Mo Qingcheng changed slightly as she whispered to Qin Wentian, “Dumbo, Orchon is many times more dangerous compared to the past. You have to be careful of him.”

“I know.” Qin Wentian nodded his head. He naturally understood the hatred Orchon had for him was so deep that it had already seeped into the bones. It was mutual for him as well.

“Mustang, today I want to see how high can this student of yours climb to in the Astral River Hall today.” Janus coldly snorted to Mustang, who was standing not far away from him.

“Don’t forget, his 2nd Astral Soul came from the 4th Heavenly Layer. How could Orchon compare to him?” Mustang’s countenance remained calm, Just like the confidence Janus had in Orchon, he was similarly also very confident in Qin Wentian.

“Okay, you all can enter the Astral River Hall now. Those with jade medallions at the 4th level and above will be the first batch of students to enter.” The gates of the Astral River Hall opened, and a silhouette walked out of it, instructing the students.

Although the Astral River Hall was spacious, it was not so spacious to the extent where it could accommodate all the students in one go. To enter, they would have to separate the students into batches, allowing those with higher leveled medallions to enter first.

“Let us enter as well.” The white crane descended, as the students around automatically parted, opening up a path for Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. At this moment, Nolan ran up and scolded, “Idiotic girl.”

Mo Qingcheng pulled a comical face as she smiled, “Don’t be so petty.”

“Qin Wentian, I heard that your 2nd Astral Soul came from the 4th Heavenly Layer. I hope you won’t disappoint us later.” From the side, Qiu Mo’s voice drifted over, as he slowly entered the Astral River Hall.

“A pity. I’m afraid you won’t dare to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet at the end of the year.” Jiang Xiu followed Qiu Mo, and also entered the Astral River Hall.

“How troublesome.” Qin Wentian glanced around him, his lips curling up into a cold smile. After which, he smiled and stated, “Beautiful Qingcheng, shall we enter?”

“Beautiful Qingcheng?” Nolan and Mo Qingcheng were stunned upon hearing that, and they stared blankly at Qin Wentian.

“Er.....” Qin Wentian blinked rapidly, before awkwardly laughing, “Just a natural reaction, a natural reaction.”

After which, Qin Wentian pretended that nothing had happened as he walked towards the entrance of the Astral River Hall. Looking at his back, Mo Qingcheng’s eyes flickered, and she burst out into laughter. Her brows arched into the shape of crescent moons were making her look exceptionally beautiful.

AGM 113 – Within The Astral River Hall

Mo Qingcheng entered the Astral River Hall at the same time as Qin Wentian. By the time they had entered, a majority of those from the first batch were already there. All of them stood there, gazing at the space above their heads.

When Qin Wentian stepped into the Astral River Hall, he felt a moment of shock. The space above his head wasn't the ceiling of the Astral River Hall but instead, was an actual starlit sky.

The Astral River Hall, borrowing the name of the Nine Astral Rivers in the Heavenly Layers, was also separated into 9 levels. Each and every level was completely covered with starry skies.

Standing within the Astral River Hall was similar to standing underneath the starlit skies; there were countless constellations.

“This feels as though it's real.” Qin Wentian exclaimed in shock, a wave of faint pressure cascading downwards. This pressure was as though it originated from the 1st Heavenly Layer, and those from the first batch that had entered the Astral River Hall could easily resist the astral pressure of this level.

“The creator of the Emperor Star Academy was undoubtedly a monstrous genius.” Mo Qingcheng smiled slightly, as Qin Wentian intently nodded his head in agreement.

At this moment, a sense of coldness gushed forth as Orchon's gaze shifted over to Qin Wentian. Orchon's body stood there, akin

to a pointed spear, icy cold and sharp, as though he wanted to pierce through Qin Wentian.

A cold light similarly flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes as he looked at Orchon.

“Will you participate in the Jun Lin Banquet at the end of this year?” Orchon calmly inquired. Not much rage and anger seemed to be present in his words, but it causes those who heard it feel a chill.

“I think so, yes.” Qin Wentian stared at Orchon as he indifferently replied.

“If that's the case, you'd better pray that you won't end up meeting me.” Orchon took a step forward towards Qin Wentian, as a sharp aura frenziedly gushed forth. Qin Wentian felt as though numerous long spears were piercing over in his direction. Orchon's strength was many times more powerful compared to their last meeting.

“Boom.” Orchon took another step forwards, and Astral Light coalesced into the form of an astral long spear, incomparably sharp. Waves of killing intent billowed forth, rushing towards Qin Wentian.

“Orchon, what are you doing?” Luo Huan coldly snorted, as the crowd surrounding them cast their gazes over. Mo Qingcheng's countenance also slightly changed as an indistinct pressure could be felt emanating from her.

“Relax. No matter how stupid I am, I won’t make a move within the Emperor Star Academy.” Orchon swept a glance over at Luo Huan as the long spear in his hands pierced upwards in the direction of the starlit skies. An instant later, the restriction of the 1st level broke apart, .Orchon’s body transformed into a beam of light, disappearing from the 1st level of the Astral River Hall.

“Disappeared?” Qin Wentian’s expression froze slightly. This was the first time he had entered the Astral River Hall and wasn’t that familiar with it.

His expression grew slightly heavy as he recalled the intense killing intent in Orchon’s eyes earlier. Orchon and a few others obviously wanted his death. If it was not for the Emperor Star Academy behind him, there was no way he could cultivate in peace.

“The Jun Lin Banquet.” Qin Wentian felt a huge sense of pressure. With his cultivation at the 6th level of Arterial Circulation, there was no way he was strong enough.

“You actually still wish to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet?” Jiang Xiu’s voice abruptly drifted over. Qin Wentian inclined his head as to regard Jiang Xiu.

Jiang Xiu had initially thought that Qin Wentian would not participate in the Jun Lin Banquet this year, thus, he couldn’t help but feel shocked when this fellow actually said yes to Orchon.

“Very good.” Jiang Xiu laughed as he gazed at the space above him. Piercing through the void with his sword, his silhouette also disappeared from the 1st level of the Astral River Hall.

Qiu Mo also glanced at Qin Wentian, as he too, disappeared from this level.

Many people trained their gazes onto Qin Wentian. The majority of these people were unlike Orchon and did not have hatred or grudges against him. It was only because of the commotion Qin Wentian had caused, which had inadvertently caused him to become the focal point of attention. Not to mention currently, even Mo Qingcheng also viewed him in a favourable light.

This wasn't just for those within the Astral River Hall, but the students outside as well. This time round, the objects of their focus were none other than: Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng, Qiu Mo, Jiang Xiu, Orchon, Luo Huan and Luo Cheng.

These were the people that had the chance to ascend to the 9th level of the Astral River Hall.

Outside the Astral River Hall, the spectators were currently gazing at its majestic glory. At this moment, both the 1st and 2nd levels of the Astral River Hall were already lit up by the constellations within. From the outside of the hall, the spectators could clearly see what was happening within.

“Orchon's speed is so impressive, he's the first to step into the 2nd level. Seems like the things Qin Wentian did were actually a

source of motivation for Orchon, pushing him to his limits. Currently, his level of power should be on par, or even greater than, that of Jiang Xiu, one of the 10 prodigies.”

“Jiang Xiu, Qiu Mo, Luo Cheng, have all already ascended to the 2nd level, using only an instant. How fast, I wonder who will be the first to step onto the 3rd level.”

The gazes of the spectators outside stared at the happenings within the Astral River Hall. Every time someone stepped into a level of the Astral River Hall, the constellations there would manifest and light up the surroundings. Even from the outside, they could still see it extremely clearly.

Qin Wentian contemplated the Astral River above his head. Countless constellations revolved about, interweaving into a complex and beautiful picture, as a faint pressure could be felt cascading downwards. However, to Qin Wentian, such an intensity could be totally be ignored.

“Can you feel the pressure attack from the constellations of the first level?” Luo Huan inquired.

“I’ve felt it.” Qin Wentian lightly nodded. The revolving constellations were emitting a formless pressure attack, stimulating his spirit and willpower..

“Break it apart and you would be able to ascend to the 2nd level.” Luo Huan smiled as she inclined her head. Her gaze momentarily sharpened as the aura she released fought against the astral

pressure. An instant later, Astral Light enveloped her as she disappeared in front of Qin Wentian.

Naturally, to Luo Huan, this wasn't something difficult.

“Junior Brother Qin, I will wait for you at the next level.” Mountain appeared behind him, and he punched upwards with his fist, disappearing from this level.

Very quickly, the students at the first level all ascended, leaving behind Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng, and Fan Le, who were silently regarding the Astral River above them.

“Boss, do you see anything?” A strange glow flickered in Fan Le's eyes as he looked at Qin Wentian.

“Runic lines of divine imprints.” Qin Wentian intoned in a low voice. He stared at the revolving constellations, the pathway of their movements were actually condensed from lines and lines of runic imprints. The faint sense of astral pressure actually originated from there.

“Mm, seems like you are really a genius in the field of divine inscriptions. However, I see an innate technique. The astral pressure is actually a fist manifested by some fist-type innate technique, blasting towards us.” Fan Le replied in a low voice, as Qin Wentian furrowed his brows. What he saw was actually different from what Fan Le was seeing.

“I also see an innate technique.” Mo Qingcheng nodded her head, as she continued. “The Astral River Hall contains many mysteries in it. However, majority of the students wouldn’t be able to see it. I can’t solve the mystery either. Dumbo, I will take my leave first, try your best to gain some insights.”

After Mo Qingcheng spoke, her silhouette also vanished from the 1st level, as she ascended to the 2nd level.

“I will make a move first as well.” Fan Le laughed, and with a slight intention of his will, it was as though an arrow blasted apart the void, as his silhouette also disappeared from this level.

Only Qin Wentian remained at the first level.

Such a happening caused many to be extremely astounded. Expressions of bewilderment could be seen upon the faces of the crowd when they realised that Qin Wentian was the only one remaining on the first level.

“Qin Wentian’s Astral Souls were condensed from the 3rd and 4th Heavenly Layers. The 1st layer shouldn’t be able to stop him, right?”

“Maybe, he just wanted to enjoy the mysteriousness of the 1st level.”

Many people were internally thinking that this was the reason.

At this very moment, as the crowd cast their gazes at the 2nd level, sounds of excitement abruptly rang out. Orchon had stepped into the 3rd level. Wasn't this speed a bit too terrifying?

And after which, Qiu Mo, Jiang Xiu, Luo Cheng, also ascended to the 3rd level. The shine from the constellations lit up the entire area, causing the crowd to feel as though they were bathing in the Astral Light.

“These people were all capable of condensing an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. I wonder if they are strong enough to step into the 4th layer. If they could, this would indicate that they have a very high possibility of being able to form an innate link with a constellation from the 4th Heavenly Layer.” Many people silently thought this in their hearts.

Time slowly passed by, and there were already a total of more than 10 people on the 3rd level of the Astral River Hall. The talent of these people were obviously somewhat stronger when compared to the others.

However, there was something the crowd couldn't understand. Qin Wentian was still stuck on the first level!

What was he doing? No one knew.

At this moment, Qin Wentian sat cross-legged there, as he silently studied the revolving pathway of the constellations. The complex, beautiful pictures formed by the lines of runic imprints actually formed into a fist, blasting forwards in his direction.

“Boom.” Qin Wentian only felt his mind trembling violently. However, soon after that, an excited expression could be seen on his countenance.

“Divine Imprint, Innate Technique. They were actually so perfectly connected within this astral space. This is an opportunity.” Qin Wentian’s heart thumped wildly, as he saw the fist formed by the innate technique.

After that, Qin Wentian closed his eyes, sinking into a state of deep contemplation. In the formless space, countless fist lights generated by the innate technique blasted towards him, and every time he was blasted, Qin Wentian’s consciousness trembled violently. However, this only served to make him even more excited. He had to see clearly and understand this opportunity.

And just like that, 3 days passed by. Currently, among the first batch of students, there were several who had already exited the Astral River Hall, as a new batch of students replaced them.

And as this new batch of students gradually ascended to the 2nd level, Qin Wentian was still sitting there. Nobody knew what the hell he was doing.

Gradually, the crowd even started to suspect, how on earth did Qin Wentian condense his Astral Soul. Had Qiu Mo spoken the truth? Qin Wentian did not depend on his own abilities but instead, had obtained godly luck through a fortuitous event.

5 days later, the students of the academy recycled again. As some students of the earlier batches exited, new students entered.

Abruptly, a blinding radiance shone out, so bright that even the space outside the Astral River Hall was fully illuminated. As the students outside the hall inclined their heads and regarded the Astral River Hall, their hearts couldn't help but to shudder in awe.

“Qiu Mo, has actually stepped into the 4th level. It seems that, after breaking through to Yuanfu, his 3rd Astral Soul had a chance to be condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer.” The crowd whispered in awe. “No wonder he was ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies. What a demon.”

“Boom.” At this exact instant, another silhouette appeared on the 4th level. This person, was none other than Orchon.

The countenances of the spectators outside were all incredibly fascinated, as their hearts thumped wildly in excitement. It was as though they were seeing the birth of a dazzling genius slowly soaring up into the heavens.

AGM 114 – The Wind And Clouds Rises

Orchon was different from Qiu Mo. His cultivation base was only at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, and he had yet to breakthrough to the Yuanfu Realm. Thus, the difficulty for him to ascend to the 4th level of the Astral River Hall was several times harder. This indicated that the chance of Orchon condensing his 3rd Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer far exceeded Qiu Mo's.

“Bouncing back from his shame, and undergoing such a transformation. Based on Orchon's determination, his breaking into Yuanfu is merely a matter of time.” Janus smiled as he witnessed the happenings. Casually, he glanced at the 1st level of the Astral River Hall only to see Qin Wentian still sitting there, appearing to be doing nothing. This caused a cold glint of laughter to flicker in Janus's eyes as he muttered, “Deliberately acting mysterious.”

Janus wasn't foolish enough to think that Qin Wentian wasn't able to ascend to the 2nd level.

Currently, Qin Wentian was totally immersed in his own world of comprehensions, and had forgotten the flow of time. He couldn't be bothered about who stepped into which level and such; the only thing on his mind were the mysterious runic pathways and the manifestations caused by the power of the innate technique.

The constellations revolved about as the mysterious lines of runic pathways became increasingly clearer, slowly coalescing into the

outline of a fist, and exploding forth towards Qin Wentian. However, as of now, this type of attack was unable to shake his consciousness any longer. Qin Wentian quietly contemplated and attempted to gain even more insights.

Time flowed by. 12 days went by in a flash, and Mo Qingcheng also ascended to the 4th level of the Astral River Hall. However, they were unable to advance any further. The 4th level of the Astral River Hall gave them an unprecedented sense of pressure. Even Qiu Mo had exited the Astral River Hall. He had no way of withstanding and enduring that formless energy pressuring his consciousness.

“Still at the 1st level?” A strange expression appeared on Qiu Mo’s face. What exactly was that fellow doing?

At this moment, Qin Wentian could already clearly see the myriad pathway of each runic lines. Not only that, the moment he understood the connection, it was as though a huge column of light had appeared within his sea of consciousness, as he entered into a state of enlightenment.

“Wrong. From the beginning, my way of thinking was already mistaken. How could I observe the revolving runic pathways of already completed inscriptions? Each and every divine imprint is a different kind of entity, a different kind of concept.” Qin Wentian still had his eyes closed, but the corners of his mouth twitched. This sensation of enlightenment was extremely marvelous.

Qin Wentian began to activate his innate technique as he willed himself into his dreamscape.

In his dream, Qin Wentian stood alone in a desolate courtyard. His hand was wielding an Astral Heavenly Hammer, as runic lines of divine imprints began interweaving within his body.

Abruptly, Astral Energy began to circulate as the Heavenly Hammer in Qin Wentian's hand smashed towards the ground. An instant later, the picture of a divine imprint appeared. This was none other than the human-type divine imprint that he had created.

“Wielders of Forging-type Astral Souls were natural born weaponsmiths. They could directly construct the symbols of divine imprints within their body.” Qin Wentian silently remarked. Maybe, this was the true meaning of natural born weaponsmiths.

The ancient halberd appeared in his hand. As Qin Wentian stood there, his aura explosively surged.

Abruptly, his body formed countless after-images, as the faint illusion of the a Garuda's wings appeared on his back. The ancient halberd exploded forwards in fury, as the tip of the halberd manifested a raging wind that transformed into a terrifying spiral.

“Boom!” The sound of an explosion echoed through the air as the ground before him trembled and broke apart. This attack didn't originate from the Berserker Beast Halberd Technique. Rather, it was a move of his self-creation, emanating the same ferocious aura as his divine inscription painting. Only, it was still imperfect, and he could not manifest the same level of heaven-toppling might in

reality.

As Qin Wentian discovered the feeling, he started to perfect this halberd technique. This halberd strike of his contained the integration of his Astral Soul, Aura, and Divine Yuan. This would become his ultimate attack.

“Since this halberd technique was created within my dream, I shall name it as the Great Dream Halberd Art. Not only that, I shall name the first attack stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art as Mountain Splitter.” Qin Wentian remarked in his heart, indicating that he had the intent to create a complete set of his own halberd techniques. In the future, he would create new divine imprints, and continue creating new innate techniques.

This first attack stance contained an imposing, majestic aura. The might of the attack could even split apart the great mountains. Mountain Splitter, aptly named.

Qin Wentian continued perfecting the Mountain Splitter Stance, and magnified the scope of his dream, losing himself in his fantasy. He imagined himself as an existence that could tear the heavens asunder, and split the earth apart, akin to a Garuda moving unhindered throughout the whole universe.

In the blink of an eye, half a month had passed. Majority of those among the first batch that entered, had already exited. Bewildered looks appeared on their faces as they witnessed Qin Wentian still sitting in the 1st level. However, today, Qin Wentian finally opened his eyes. He stood up, broke apart the restriction, and stepped into the 2nd level.

“That fellow finally decided to ascend to the 2nd level.” Luo Huan was standing outside as she somewhat exasperatedly stated. During these few days of waiting, she had already heard what the crowd had to say about Qin Wentian. There were those that didn’t understand, and there was also many with suspicions.

However, the crowd quickly discovered that Qin Wentian, unlike the other elites who quickly broke apart the restriction of the 2nd level, had actually sat down in the cross-legged position once again in the 2nd level.

Many people had already departed the area. Cultivation time was precious; they didn’t have the time to waste to watch Qin Wentian doing nothing.

Four days later, the voices of suspicion grew louder and louder as Qin Wentian ascended to the 3rd level. Could it be that Qin Wentian was truly undeserving of his reputation? He had to spend great amounts of time enduring the pressure of each level before he could break apart the restrictions.

If not, why was he acting the same way in each of the levels?

“The Jun Lin Banquet will commence soon, work hard but take note of the time and exit here quickly.” Mo Qingcheng smiled as she regarded Qin Wentian who was sitting with his legs crossed on the 3rd level of the Astral River Hall. After which, she mounted the white crane together with Nolan, and they departed the Emperor Star Academy.

Things gradually calmed down outside the Astral River Hall as the crowd departed from the area. However, the atmosphere got increasingly livelier in the Emperor Star Academy compared to how it had been in the past.

This was because the end of the year was nearing, and the Jun Lin Banquet was about to commence. Even those elites that had been training outside the academy didn't want to miss this chance, and they rushed back quickly.

Orchon stood within the Knight's Association while emanating a faint wave of coldness. Inclining his head, he gazed in the direction of the Astral River Hall as he inquired. "Which level is he at now?"

"He just stepped into the 4th level not too long ago." Someone beside Orchon replied. The 'him' in their sentences, naturally referred to Qin Wentian.

"Still at the 4th level? It seems like, this is where your limit lies." Orchon calmly remarked.

Orchon wasn't the only one that thought this, several others thought so as well. Qin Wentian's limit was the 4th level of the Astral River Hall. It seemed like the Astral Soul he had condensed from the 4th heavenly layer earlier had truly been a result of an incomparably great fortuitous event.

Aside from some exceptions, majority of the students had gradually forgotten that Qin Wentian was still within the Astral

River Hall. What most of the students were concerned about was: how strong would the returning students be? And what would their rankings in the Jun Lin Banquet be?

Orchon had also stepped into the 4th level of the Astral River Hall. The him now had already undergone a transformation. Maybe, he had the chance to obtain one of the top nine rankings, and could even become one of the 10 prodigies

Aside from him, Jiang Xiu, Luo Cheng, Luo Huan, also had excellent results.

Naturally, Luo Qianqiu couldn't be neglected as well. He was outstanding, with an extremely high level of innate talent. It was said that this time round, he only had one goal: to obtain the first rank in the Jun Lin Banquet.

There were countless geniuses in the Jun Lin Banquet, how difficult would it be if one wanted to attain first? It was also said that the geniuses from the Snowcloud Country would participate as well. It was unclear if Luo Qianqiu had any opportunity to obtain the first rank.

Anyway, many people were excitedly anticipating the coming of the Jun Lin Banquet this year.

It wasn't only the Emperor Star Academy; currently, the entire Royal Capital was the same as well.

The Royal Academy, Divine Wind Academy, and Seven Stars Martial Palace, were all eagerly anticipating the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet.

And in the courtyard of the Royal Academy, Mu Rou stood beneath a tree. As she thought about the experiences she'd had during these past days, she couldn't help but feel deeply moved.

Currently, the support given to her by her family was many times greater than that of the past. The attitudes of everyone towards her had also changed for the better. At the same time, the people in her academy weren't cold and indifferent towards her anymore. On the contrary, they were extremely enthusiastic when interacting with her.

Everything that she'd experienced, she had taken it with a grain of salt. After going through so many things, she could more clearly comprehend the meaning of human complexity.

“The Jun Lin Banquet is commencing soon. This time round, who will dazzle the Royal Capital? Qin Wentian, will he be there as well?” Mu Rou murmured. The Jun Lin Banquet was the grandest event of the Chu Country every year. This year was no exception, and even if Qin Wentian participated this year, he wouldn't have many accomplishments. However, she believed that if he participated in the grand banquet next year, the glow of his talent would be absolutely dazzling.

Today, a group of flying-type demonic beasts was soaring above the skies of the Chu Country. This group of flying beasts was pulling dragon carriages. Several powerful existences flew

alongside the demonic beasts, shocking the entire Chu Country. Very quickly, the news spread around: the Crown Prince of the Snowcloud Country had brought along the geniuses of the Snowcloud Country to the Chu Country.

Today, in the Dark Forest, a group of cultivators under the leadership of the Asura Faction, returned to the Royal Capital.

Today, one of the three greatest companies in Chu, the Heaven's Wonder Company, which was also the biggest casino in the Royal Capital, had already prepared betting rates for individuals predicted to attain the top 9 rankings in the Jun Lin Banquet.

That wasn't all; when the Jun Lin Banquet commenced, Heaven's Wonder would also prepare separate betting rates for figures that were constantly in the limelight.

And naturally, Yuan Meteor Stones and other cultivation items would become the stakes for betting.

Based on the betting rates proposed by Heaven's Wonder, the payout rate for Luo Qianqiu obtaining first rank, was the lowest. This indicated that the person Heaven's Wonder had the highest expectations of during the Jun Lin Banquet this year was none other than Luo Qianqiu.

AGM 115 – Lighting Up The Starry Skies

Royal Capital, the Chu Emperor District occupied an immense area, and was a place where tens of thousands of soldiers stood guard in all directions. Normally, no one was allowed to enter.

In this vast and extensive Chu Emperor District, with a single glance, one could see a total of nine towering platforms constructed there. They were displayed in a triangular formation, with one platform in front, three platforms in the middle, and five platforms at the back.

On the left and right side of the nine towering platforms were flights of stairs with a total of tens of thousands of stone seats. In fact, there were even stone tables in front of the stone seats; the distribution was even and scattered, but was also extremely organized. It was as though there would be no problems if one wanted to hold a grand banquet in this area.

In front of the first towering platform, there were a flight of steps carved from Azure Dragon Jadeite. It emanated the aura of an emperor: revered, aloof, looking down on everyone. And on the top of that flight of steps, there was an impressive-looking grand seat. This was none other than the Azure Jadeite Dragon Seat!

In the past, during the establishment of the Chu Empire, the emperor who founded Chu sat upon this Azure Jadeite Dragon Seat. Inviting dukes, feudal lords and other valuable and important guests from all directions. It was also used to appoint generals for tasks and to muster troops.

Atop the nine towering platforms, the shadow of the nine battalions of troops of the past were still as though they remained there.

The entire Chu Emperor District fully represented the might and power of the Royal Authority. And hence, the Chu Emperor District became the grounds where the Jun Lin Banquet would be held each year.

Jun Lin Banquet was an event that the sovereign king would personally attend, as well as inviting all the dukes and feudal lords, and influential bigwig officers.

It was only that the nine towering platforms were no longer used to appoint generals or to muster troops. But instead, they became the arenas where the geniuses of Chu would showcase their brilliant talents.

Today, the warm and genial sunlight cascaded onto the great land of the Chu Country, as terrifying streams of people could be seen around the area of the Chu Emperor District. Countless people from the Royal Capital made their way towards the nine towering platforms. Not only that, even people from the other parts of Chu traversed a thousand miles, bypassing mountains and rivers, coming to the Chu Capital, all for the sake of witnessing the Jun Lin Banquet.

Tomorrow would be the day when the Jun Lin Banquet would commence, but now, there were already people fighting for the good seats, hoping for a seat with the best view that was able to view the glory of the nine towering arenas.

Some inns that were quite far away from the Chu Emperor District were purposely constructed to be extremely tall. And from there, one could view the happenings on top of the nine towering platforms. Currently, such inns were already fully booked and filled to the brim with people.

The Jun Lin Banquet was the greatest and most magnificent event in the Chu Country every year. Unprecedented enthusiasm abounded everywhere, this type of uplifting attitude towards cultivation also ignited the passions of each and every generation of youngsters in Chu that had embarked on their own pathway of cultivation.

“I’ve also heard that the Jun Lin Banquet this time round is the most magnificent one ever to be held in over 10 years.”

“Yeah, to think that the Snowcloud Country would actually collaborate and co-organise the Jun Lin Banquet this year. Currently, the Seven Nights, Three Swords, and Duo Prides of the Snowcloud Country have already arrived at the Royal Capital, and they are staying in the Imperial Palace. Not only that, our Chu Country’s Luo Qianqiu, the 10 prodigies, talents like Orchon as well as the various geniuses of all the martial academies will be attending as well. The competition at the Jun Lin Banquet this year is going to be exceedingly marvellous to behold.”

Everyone was anticipating the competition at the Jun Lin Banquet.

The citizens of Chu naturally knew which were the geniuses that received the greatest attention. Heaven's Wonder, as one of the top three companies in the Chu Country, naturally had already conducted a detailed investigation. As long as one looked at the betting rates set by Heaven's Wonder, they could easily understand which were the geniuses that received the most recognition.

The names of Ye WuQue and Immortal Drunken Sword couldn't be found anywhere in the betting rates. This indicated that both Ye WuQue and Immortal Drunken Sword were no longer at the realm of Arterial Circulation, and had broken through to Yuanfu.

Currently, within the geniuses that attained the most recognition, other than Luo Qianqiu, was [Sikong Mingyue](#) of the Snowcloud Country. Sikong Mingyue, and the crown prince of Snowcloud Country, were dubbed as the 'Duo Prides' of the Snowcloud Empire.

TN Note: Sikong Mingyue (司空明月) → Bright Moon in the Skies

Other than the two of them, there were 10 prodigies of Chu, The Seven Nights and Three Swords of Snowcloud, as well as a few other geniuses from Emperor Star Academy, Royal Academy and Godly General Martial Palace. This was the batch of geniuses that had obtained the most recognition.

And within the Royal Capital, there were many that had staked all their life's possessions and betted with the Heaven's Wonder. Naturally, there were some still withholding their bets, waiting for the performances of the geniuses before making their decisions. However, at that time, the betting rates would naturally be adjusted as well.

Currently, be it within or outside of the Royal Capital, everyone was paying attention to the situation within the Chu Emperor District.

Even within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, only very few of the students could still be seen. The majority of them were already making their way to the Chu Emperor District.

And not only the students, the elders of the academies were also on their way over there.

Although in the dark, the relationship between the Royal Clan and the Emperor Star Academy wasn't that good, they would still have to give each other face on the surface. And thus, elders from the Emperor Star Academy were also allowed to enter, thereby obtaining a seat.

Not only the Emperor Star Academy was as such, all elders from the nine martial academies of the Chu Capital were also be invited to this grand banquet. After all, the main stars of the event were none other than the talented students of their academy.

And when dusk approached, the stray remnants of the students in the Emperor Star Academy had also departed from the school grounds. After all, tomorrow morning would be the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet.

The students of the Emperor Star Academy had long forgotten that there was still a student that has yet to emerge from the River

Astral Hall.

After so many days, the number of people observing Qin Wentian had naturally lessened. The attention of humans was always easily shifted – especially during times when a major event was about to occur.

Outside the Astral River Hall, Luo Huan, Mountain, and Fan Le stood, involuntarily smiling bitterly as they stared at the silhouette sitting on the 4th level.

“If this rascal still doesn’t want to come out, he’ll miss the chance to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet this year. Although this time round, the probability of him having any accomplishments is not that great, it could still be considered an excellent opportunity to temper himself.” Luo Huan helplessly scolded in a low voice.

“Seeing that Junior Brother Qin was able to stay in the 4th level for so long, it shows that his endurance probably surpasses many others. He is indeed someone who had condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer. Why not let him stay in there a few days more; when the time comes again for him to condense his 3rd Astral Soul, his consciousness and will will be able to stay in the 4th Heavenly Layer for a longer period of time, and thus he will have more opportunity to form innate links with even more constellations.”

It was as though Mountain was worried Luo Huan would disturb Qin Wentian, as he reminded.

“Of course I know that.” Luo Huan glared at Mountain as she continued, “Let’s go, we should hurry to the banquet.”

“Mmm.” Mountain nodded his head. This time round, he and Luo Huan were participants of the Jun Lin Banquet.

“Senior Sister, you guys can go first, I will wait for a little while longer.” Fan Le smiled at both of them. Luo Huan and Mountain nodded as they departed the academy, leaving only Fan Le behind. Fan Le cast his gaze at the 4th level of the Astral River Hall, as a light flashed incessantly in his eyes. Touching his chin, Fan Le murmured, “Based on your personality, there should be no way that you would be willing to miss the Jun Lin Banquet.”

If one were to ask who in the Emperor Star Academy understood Qin Wentian the most, the names mentioned would undoubtedly be Qin Yao and Fan Le.

Fan Le had a nagging feeling that this rascally fellow would emerge from the Astral River Hall before the Jun Lin Banquet commenced.

It was not that Qin Wentian wasn’t able to break apart the restriction in the 4th level. Although the 4th level was sufficient to give him a sense of pressure, he had already adapted to it after a period of time. And at this moment, he was intently analysing something.

He discovered that in the starry space of each level of the Astral River Hall, the countless constellations actually formed into

pathways of runic lines of divine inscriptions. When the runic lines gathered together, they transformed into an innate technique, which in turn manifested an invisible, formless pressure that was akin to the astral pressure felt in the 9 Heavenly Layers. How incredibly mysterious.

At this moment, Qin Wentian was thinking; if the emulated astral pressure in the 4th level of the Astral River Hall was already so similar as though it was real when compared to the 4th Heavenly Layer, then, what about the 5th level, not to mention the 6th to the 9th levels?

Even the founder of the academy shouldn't be able to emulate the astral pressure of the 9th Heavenly Layer, right? Unless the founder had already reached the stage of condensing Astral Souls from the 9th Heavenly Layer. However, that probability was too low. At the very least, Qin Wentian didn't believe that the founder of the Emperor Star Academy would possess such heaven-shaking strength

Not only that, but the current runic pathways which Qin Wentian observed transformed into fist lights. And in the night sky, four different layer of spaces abruptly appeared. The spaces within the four different layers simultaneously flowed downwards, and transformed into a terrifying spiral, each layer merging into each other, when abruptly, a straight fist exploded forth from the midst of that terrifying spiral black hole.

In that instant of explosion, this was no longer a single, one-time attack, but was as though the silhouettes of boundless fists filled the entire skies, a multitude of attacks combined together. It was something similar to the principle behind the Revolving Sea imprint, the stacking of fist lights in superposition but yet, it was

something even more mysterious – the might of the attack was also many times stronger.

“I want to take a look at the 5th level.” Qin Wentian silently remarked in his heart. After which, he stood up, and resolutely sent his iron-willed consciousness into the centre of that terrifying black-coloured spiral. Wave after wave of terrifying fist lights blasted downwards, but they were unable to eradicate his consciousness. And as a radiant light flickered, his silhouette disappeared from the 4th level.

Outside the Astral River Hall, night had already descended. The light emitted from the Astral River Hall was still as radiant as before. Fatty Fan Le casually sat on the ground. However, at this moment, he suddenly felt a light so bright he could even see it with his eyes closed. Involuntarily, he wrenched open his eyes, only to see the radiance of the starry skies, incomparably resplendent, lighting up the 5th level. Fan Le froze there, as he stared unblinkingly at the Astral River Hall.

“The 5th level, this monster!” Fan Le’s mouth opened gapingly, as an expression of immense shock painted his countenance. That perverse fellow actually stepped into the 5th level of the Astral River Hall.

“Doesn’t this means that he has a chance at condensing an Astral Soul from the 5th Heavenly Layer?” Fan Le blinked his eyes, as he contemplated his surroundings. At this moment, the entire Emperor Star Academy was exceptionally silent, which caused Fan Le to feel slightly depressed. Staring at the radiant astral light so bright that it covered the entire sky, Fan Le mumbled, “The astral

light is so resplendent, but yet, there's no audience."

"Why are you so good at picking such lousy moments. I really wanted to see what kind of expressions would be on Qiu Mo and Jiang Xiu's faces." Fan Le stood up and he walked about, feeling very unsatisfied. How wasted, such a good chance to boast, but yet the timing so coincidentally collided with the night before the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet. No one saw.....the extremely depressed fatty.

At this moment, the old man in charge of the Astral River Hall was sitting in a remote corner. And as he saw the resplendent radiance lit up by the 5th level, his body involuntarily shook slightly, as a light flickered in his previously muddy-looking eyes.

"Stepping into the 5th level of the Astral River Hall at such a young age." The old man silently murmured, as an unknown sense of joy and surprise arose in his heart.

Buzz! And at this very moment, an eye-piercing beam of light erupted from the Astral River Hall, radiating outwards towards the Emperor Star Academy. The resplendence of that astral light was so dazzling, causing the old man to freeze, before his body abruptly trembled violently.

"How is this possible, how is this possible?!" The old man had a disbelieving expression etched on his face as he gazed at the brilliance of the astral light that covered the entire sky. In just an instant, that earlier beam of light had lit up the entire Emperor Star Academy, and when the countless number of students that still remained behind inclined their heads, it was as though they

saw a second piece of a starlit sky!

Fan Le, who was walking back and forth, had his mouth open wide in shock as he froze there. The pupils of his eyes were fixated unmovingly on the 2nd piece of starry sky.

“Damn!” In the middle of the night, a voice rang out as that beam of astral light dimmed. The remaining students all looked about in confusion, as puzzlement was evident on their faces.

Who exactly was it that had lit up that 2nd piece of starry sky!

AGM 116 – Gathering At The Chu Emperor District

“What exactly happened just now?” Low murmurs could be heard drifting about Emperor Star Academy.

The radiance of that single instant had lit up the night in Emperor Star Academy. It was as if they had seen a second starlit sky. This scenario was too fascinating and marvelous.

The old man in charge of Astral River Hall trembled violently as he witnessed a handsome youth slowly strolling out of the exit. His eyes glowed with a fiery blaze despite that feeble and aged countenance of his.

Although it had only lasted for an instant, this youngster had actually stepped onto the 6th level. How had he done that?

“Too terrifying.” Qin Wentian was extremely depressed. When he had stepped onto the the 5th level, he’d realised that the runic lines the boundless constellations contained revolved together as one. As a result, the fist light they’d formed contained an extremely powerful might within them, and when his consciousness had been blasted, it had gotten exceedingly difficult for him to continue enduring. Using all the strength he could muster, he’d broken apart the restriction of the 5th level and had set foot upon the 6th level of the Astral River Hall.

However, the time he spent on the 6th level had only lasted for an instant. In there, it was as though he saw constellations

transforming into meteors of fist light, gathering together, and exploding forth with the speed of a shooting star. Luckily, the astral pressure hadn't killed him, and had only forced him back onto the 5th layer.

Because his consciousness and will had been damaged, even the pressure at the 5th level became too tough for him to endure. Qin Wentian had thus chosen to exit the Astral River Hall.

"I need to go into closed door seclusion." The first thing that escaped his mouth after exiting the Astral River Hall was actually saying that he wanted to cultivate.

"Er....." Fan Le blinked his eyes. This perverse beast, didn't he know what he had just done?

"Tomorrow is the Jun Lin Banquet." After muttering to himself irresolutely, Fan Le remarked to Qin Wentian.

"I want to cultivate." Qin Wentian replied, staring at Fan Le, before departing the vicinity of the Astral River Hall.

Fatty stood there, stunned. He mumbled, "Could it be that the crucial moment has arrived?"

After all, Qin Wentian had stayed many days within the Astral River Hall, and should have gained some insights. Fatty didn't believe that this rascal had wasted his time in the Astral River Hall doing nothing.

Just now, he'd personally witnessed that after so many days of stillness, a beam of dazzling, resplendent light, had radiated out for a moment.

The only regretful thing was that there had been no audience..... Fatty, was extremely depressed.

After thinking of here, Fatty pulled a face. He chased after Qin Wentian, the flesh on his body bouncing and quivering with each step.

The Emperor Star Academy was still extremely quiet. But at this moment, the emotions of a group of special existences were unsettled. They had always stayed within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, guarding this sacred ground. It was as though they existed perpetually in the darkness, and had very few chances to walk out in the light. Besides, even if they did, almost no one would know who they were.

Qin Wentian did indeed enter closed door seclusion for his cultivation. Although tomorrow was the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet, he wanted to sort out all the insights and comprehensions he'd gained within the Astral River Hall. These would enable his strength to take another step forward. As these 'steps' gradually increased, they would allow him to complete a kind of transformation.

Thus, he returned to his residence and fell into a deep slumber, stepping into the dreamscape he created.

Beside him were numerous Yuan Meteor Stones. He would be able to use these Yuan Meteor Stones anytime they were needed.

Tonight, the starlight around the residence Qin Wentian was staying in was incomparably resplendent. Above the skies, the astral energy from two constellations cascaded downwards, enveloping the dreaming Qin Wentian.

Although he was in a state of deep slumber, both of his Astral Souls were released, and they absorbed the astral energies. From his body, crackling and rattling sounds unceasingly rang out, as a surge of terrifying energy surged about frenziedly within. Akin to the torrential waves of the ocean, the sound of gushing water ringing out in the silence of the night could be heard extremely clearly..

At this moment, Qin Wentian didn't create an overly profound dreamscape. He was only observing his body in his dream. In this instant, it was as though he could see all the arterial pathways and energy channels within his body. A brand new arterial pathway was currently being formed, as the the arterial pathway frenziedly rushed forward. It connected all parts of his body together, including his four limbs and bone structure.

A beam of light entered Qin Wentian's body as the 7th arterial pathway was created. These seven arterial pathways were akin to seven astral rivers flowing in his body, and it was as though they had their own individual trajectories. Moreover, motes of astral light could be seen flowing through the arterial pathways, causing

Qin Wentian's heart to tremble slightly.

He had crippled his own meridians, using astral energy to form a set of Stellar Meridians pathways. Making a comparison, it was as though his arterial pathways were akin to the astral rivers in the heavenly layers. If that's the case, wasn't the human body also a heavenly layer of sorts?

“My stellar meridians would allow the flow of astral energy to be extremely smooth. The astral energy would be able to gather in any part of my body, and executed via my innate techniques. It would be just like in the past, when I spat out a palm imprint.”

Qin Wentian was silently contemplating in his heart. He gradually began to grow more convinced that cultivation wasn't easy. Why not just eschew logic and proceed forwards using his own insights and methods, rather than limiting himself, following the pre-set rules of cultivation?

He had already discovered the connection between divine imprints and innate techniques, this was something that even Senior Gongyang had not thought of before. In addition, Senior Gongyang had once said that the Astral Soul, after stepping into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, would be one of the most direct methods of attack, and could even be used to complement one's innate techniques.

The road of cultivation was hard to traverse, but the road was also incomparably vast. Why not explore it fully, rather than following the clear-cut path?

When he awoke from his dream, it was already morning.

Qin Wentian opened his eyes, and in the depth of his eyes, a sharp, radiant light exploded forth, as bright as the glow of constellations. He felt extremely clear-headed, as his senses sharper. This was the transformation that had occurred as a result of the increase in his cultivation base.

Every time an arterial pathway was formed, it represented an increase in cultivation level. The quality of one's body would naturally improve along with it.

"I've actually used up all the Yuan Meteor Stones." Qin Wentian felt shock in his heart. Cultivation exhausted resources way too quickly. Luckily, he today didn't have to worry about insufficient Yuan Meteor Stones for the time being.

As he moved and stretched his body, the crisp sounds of cracking could be heard. This kind of feeling felt extremely marvelous, as though all the pores of his body were incomparably comfortable.

"You finally bear to wake up." A voice drifted over, only to see Fan Le lazily lying down under the shelter of a pavilion, rubbing his sleepy eyes, as though he had not fully awoken.

"Fatty, why are you sleeping here?" Qin Wentian involuntarily smiled as he discovered Fan Le.

“I’m waiting for you to attend the Jun Lin Banquet.” Fan Le stood up as he shook the dust of his body, and glared at Qin Wentian with disdain. This rascal, even the commotion he caused when he cultivated in his dream was also so great. Couldn’t he just let Fatty get a good night’s sleep?

“You are also participating?” Qin Wentian’s eyes shone brightly. These few days, Teacher Mustang had been personally guiding Fatty on his cultivation, thus there should be a huge improvement. Not only that, Qin Wentian had also given Fan Le several Yuan Meteor Stones to aid him in his cultivation.

Qin Wentian was very certain that the talent of this fatty was not low at all. It was just as Mustang had said, this fatty was too lazy.

“I’m going there to bet.” Fatty said with a straight face. After Qin Wentian’s registration, Heaven’s Wonder would naturally release the betting rates for Qin Wentian. Once the betting rates for Qin Wentian were out, Fatty would stake all his possessions on this fellow. For cultivators that were totally disregarded like Qin Wentian, as long as they could obtain one of the top nine rankings, the payout should be sky high.

Thinking of this, Fan Le stared at Qin Wentian with a fervent glow in his eyes, causing Qin Wentian to shake uncontrollably. What weird ideas was Fatty having again?

Despite it still being early morning, the Emperor Chu District was already flooded with people. The Royal Capital mobilised a regiment of 10,000 troops to provide security and maintain order, sealing the entire perimeter of the Chu Emperor District. For those

that came to spectate, they had to stay a distance away to avoid disrupting the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet.

This area had the same rules as the other areas of the Chu Capital. It was prohibited for those below Yuanfu to mount flying beasts. However, there were many cultivators mounted on flying-type demonic beasts flying about in the skies today.

That wasn't all, rows of flying-type demonic beasts also delivered good wine and delicacies over to the guests' seats. Looking at the multitude of demonic beasts blotting out the skies, the crowd exclaimed in excitement in their hearts. This was indeed the grandest event to be held in the Chu Country this year.

The Jun Lin Banquet would officially commence today.

The Royal Clan had invited all the dukes,feudal lords, and important guests from every area.

“The Mu Clan that has always kept a low profile have actually arrived this early.” Some of the crowd cast their gazes over only to see a line of silhouettes walking up the flight of stairs. As one of the noble clans, the Mu Clan naturally had a seat on the spectator stands.

Mu Rou also appeared within the ranks of those that came here today from the Mu Clan.

“Those from the Ou Clan are here as well. I heard that Orchon's

ambition this time round is really great.” Another line of silhouettes appeared, and these were none other than the members from the Ou Clan.

According to the betting rates of Heaven’s Wonder, it was highly probable that Orchon would enter the top 9 rankings of the Jun Lin Banquet. At the moment, the Ou Clan was probably feeling proud..

“The Ye Clan and those from the Violet Palace have also arrived together.”

“And who are those behind the Ye Clan, that young lady is really beautiful. She shouldn’t be from the Ye Clan, right?”

“That’s Autumn Snow, from the Bai Clan. Her name had once resounded throughout Chu, creating a huge commotion. However, it seems that there were some problems when it came to condensing her 2nd Astral Soul. it was as though she had somehow regressed.” Someone replied, as the crowd was enlightened. So, they were from the Bai Clan that hailed from the Sky Harmony City. Last year, the Bai Clan did indeed cause a huge commotion. After all, as someone that’s able to condense her first Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, she had a high probability of becoming a strong existence that would create history in the future.

Now, after having arrived at the Royal Capital, Autumn Snow didn’t seem to have any major accomplishments, and had thus gradually been forgotten by others. On the other hand, the trash back then, Qin Wentian, had already become a mighty figure

endowed with the blessings of various factions.

“Students from the various martial academies are here.” At this moment, more and more silhouettes appeared. As they made their way up the flight of stairs, they caused much commotion.

“The Star River Association’s members are also here.”

“The Divine Weapon Pavilion has also arrived. It’s really rare to see them attending the Jun Lin Banquet.”

“The Mo Clan came as well.”

The crowd gazed fervently at the spectators stand, feeling immensely excited. The Jun Lin Banquet was about to commence!

AGM 117 – Commencement Of The Jun Lin Banquet

The authority of the Star River Association exceeds that of the Royal Authority.

The Divine Weapon Pavilion had wealth that could rival an entire empire.

Mo Clan had the strongest cultivators under the Heavenly Dipper Realm in the entire Chu Country.

These three great powers all held special positions within the Chu Country. And they had all gathered here today.

“The Divine Weapon Pavilion has never appeared officially before during past Jun Lin Banquets.” People in the crowd were silently speculating. But today, they had actually appeared.

Why had the Divine Weapon Pavilion come here today?

Rumour has it that the Divine Weapon Pavilion placed tremendous importance on and held Qin Wentian in exceptionally high regards. That day, amidst the snowstorm, the Divine Weapon Pavilion stood on the side of Qin Wentian in opposition to the 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao.

“Mo Clan has also not made any appearances in the last few Jun

Lin Banquets. Could it be that Mo Qingcheng wants to participate in the competition later?” Some in the crowd curiously cast their gazes over to the Mo Clan where they saw a ravishing silhouette.

“Qingcheng, you are here as well.” Ye WuQue called out to Mo Qingcheng from where the Ye Clan was.

Mo Qingcheng calmly cast a glance over to that direction, and did not bother to reply.

Ye WuQue wasn't angered, he stood there quietly just as before. He, who was handsome and extraordinary, naturally made him the focal point of attention for many other young ladies. With such good looks, he wouldn't lack admirers, and in the Royal Academy, there were even several ladies that had taken the initiative to woo him.

And yet, to Ye WuQue who only seek perfection, only Mo Qingcheng was worthy enough to pair with him. However, Mo Qingcheng had never shown any sign of interest nor given him any encouragement. He had once wanted to woo Mo Qingcheng, but obviously, he had failed. Despite this, he had gradually accepted the fact that he'd failed as he witnessed the other elites also failing one by one when they tried to woo Mo Qingcheng.

But now, because Mo Qingcheng saw Qin Wentian in a different light, he felt unhappiness and dissatisfaction in his heart. Moreover, in the past, the Ye Clan had conspired to bring the fiancée of Qin Wentian over to the Ye Clan.

In Ye WuQue's eyes, Autumn Snow naturally could not hold a candle to Mo Qingcheng, not to mention the fact that Autumn Snow was already a genius that had fallen. As to whether Autumn Snow could still become his woman, he would still need to reconsider.

“The Royal Palace has arrived.”

At this moment, the gazes of the crowd shifted over, only to see a line of mounted demonic beasts landing behind the area where the Emperor Seat was located. After which, a series of silhouettes leisurely strolled up the flight of stairs, ascending to the best seats in the spectators' stand.

The one in the middle of those from the Royal Clan was none other than Chu Tianjiao.

The Jun Lin Banquet this year was presided by a Jun.
(Emperor/Prince)

Chu Tianjiao sat on the Emperor Seat of the Chu Emperor District. This indicated that, from today onwards, the Emperor of Chu had basically announced to the whole world that Chu Tianjiao would be his successor.

This was a silent announcement, which indicated that Chu Tianjiao becoming the Emperor of Chu was only a matter of time.

“It seems like the body of the current Emperor of Chu may

collapse at any moment.” Many people were speculating this in their hearts. If not, why would the Emperor not be present to preside over the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet, and even grant Chu Tianjiao the right to sit on the Emperor Seat?

And on both the sides of Chu Tianjiao, there were still several other figures.

Luo Qianqiu was standing on the left, standing shoulder to shoulder with a few other youths. And in front of Luo Qianqiu, there was another figure. It seemed as though that figure was the elder of Luo Qianqiu

Upon this sight, sharp glints of light flickered in the eyes of those who knew of the background of Luo Qianqiu. If one knew of this background they would naturally make clear deductions about where these figures had come from.

The eyes of those people had hints of heaviness within them. They had come from the Nine Mystical Palace, which was none other than the silhouette standing behind the shadow of Chu.

And as for the right direction of Chu Tianjiao, there was another silhouette that emanated an extraordinary air. He casually stood there with a smile plastered on his face. His demeanor did not lose out to Chu Tianjiao in the slightest, giving people the feeling that this person was also a dragon among humans.

This person was the Crown Prince of Snowcloud Country, Xiao Lü, one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud. His authority in the

Snowcloud Country did not lose out to Chu Tianjiao's authority in Chu.

There was also a group of youths standing around Xiao Lü. They were none other than the most talented elites of Snowcloud: Sikong Mingyue, of the Duo Prides, as well as the Three Swords and Seven Nights of Snowcloud.

At this moment, all the figures in the spectators' stand stood up, as they cast their gazes over to Chu Tianjiao sitting in the Emperor Seat. In the past, the commencement of the Jun Lin Banquet would always start off with this etiquette where the spectators would rise in respect. But today, the figure they were rising for was none other than Chu Tianjiao.

"Everyone, please be seated." Chu Tianjiao waved his hands, laughing as he spoke.

"Thank you, your Highness." The crowd bowed, as they took their seats.

"Everyone, please enjoy the feast." Chu Tianjiao politely spoke, as he took the lead, raising his cup in toast to the crowd.

At the same time, a group of people separately headed towards the nine towering platforms in the middle of the stands, preparing tables and chairs, and paper and pen.

"Today I feel extremely honored that, the Snowcloud Country, in

collaboration with our great Chu, is hosting this Jun Lin Banquet together. I believe that this year's event, hosted in my Chu Country, is one of unprecedented grandness. Now, elites at the 5th level of Arterial Circulation and above, you all may proceed up the nine towering platforms and register for the competition."

Chu Tianjiao smiled as he spoke to the crowd. The lowest qualification to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet was for one to have a cultivation base at the 5th layer of Arterial Circulation. If a cultivation had a lower cultivation base, there would be no need for any battle at all.

"There are nine towering platforms; you all can choose which platform you want to register for. After that, each platform will begin a series of elimination battles. Your opponents will be randomly chosen by the judges, and the battles will last till only two people remain. Thus, with nine platforms, a total of 18 people will be able to advance in the end." The old-looking figure beside Chu Tianjiao could be seen speaking. "These 18 that pass the elimination battle will enter the next round of the competition. The top nine rankings in the Jun Lin Banquet will be determined this time round."

The rules of the Jun Lin Banquet were very simple. The nine towering platforms would simultaneously commence their battles, and each platform's elimination battles would result in only two contestants remaining.

Because of the existence of the nine towering platforms, those people that had their eyes stuck fast on seizing the nine top rankings could register for the battles in different platforms. This

would allow them to avoid fighting in an elimination battle in the first round. This also meant that those contesting for the top nine rankings couldn't be eliminated out early.

“Qianqiu, this will be your next stage.”

Beside Chu Tianjiao, the person in charge could be seen calmly speaking to Luo Qianqiu, who was standing at his side.. Immediately, Luo Qianqiu lightly nodded his head.

This time, the top ranking of the Jun Lin Banquet was definitely going to be his.

As he stepped forth, Luo Qianqiu's body soared up the skies, akin to transforming into a great roc descending from the heavens, and landed upon the foremost, towering platform.

Luo Qianqiu had chosen to register at the first towering platform.

In the same instant, a silhouette appeared beside Luo Qianqiu. This person was none other than Sikong Mingyue. Locking his gaze with Luo Qianqiu's, one could see a resplendent glow of light flickering within the depths of their eyes.

“Both Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue have the greatest probability of obtaining the top ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet this year. One could infer this fact from the betting rates set by Heaven's Wonder. To think that the both of them had actually registered for the same towering platform.”

Everyone's eyes were filled with concentration. If this was the case, the judge wouldn't let them compete against each other that early right? Otherwise, they'd be watching one of the seeded contestants be eliminated, and that wouldn't be a very entertaining show.

It was as though the two victors of the first towering platform had already been set in stone ahead of time. Aside from Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, there wouldn't be any other elites registering for the same platform.

The people participating continued walking towards the direction of the nine towering platforms, registering their names.

“The information from Heaven's Wonder is accurate indeed. This time round, the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital – Immortal Drunken Wine and Ye WuQue, didn't prepare themselves to compete in the Jun Lin Banquet. They should have already broken into Yuanfu. And those in the bottom five rankings of the 10 prodigies have chosen different platforms from each other to register for.”

“Sikong Mingyue had already registered, and two of the Three Swords, as well as five of the Seven Nights, have done so as well. Their martial prowess should have already reached the peak of Arterial Circulation. Moreover, they've also chosen separate platforms to register for, opting instead to spread themselves apart.”

“Some of the elites from the Emperor Star Academy have begun their registration as well. I heard that the prowess of Orchon, Luo Huan, and Luo Cheng aren’t that much weaker when compared to that of Jiang Xiu.”

“That’s Hou Tie and Leng Ya from the Godly General Martial Palace. From their betting rates, it seems that both of them have also received the recognition of Heaven’s Wonder and have a chance of obtaining a position within the top nine rankings in the Jun Lin Banquet.”

The information from Heaven’s Wonder was extremely terrifying. They could even obtain information on the reclusive genius disciples from the Godly General Martial Palace.

That wasn’t all; at the moment, an inn situated near the Chu Emperor District was actually a branch of Heaven’s Wonder. And during the spectating of the battles, you could just run over there to check out the betting rates, which increased your stakes heavily.

After a period of time, when almost all those participating in the battles had already walked up to their platforms, the spectators realised something special. Those that had the chance to obtain the top nine rankings of the Jun Lin Banquet seemed to always avoid platforms with the most people registered there. It was clear to see that they were observing each other, and seemed as if they shared some kind of tacit understanding.

From the betting rates set by Heaven’s wonder, those that obtained the most recognition were: Snowcloud Country: Sikong Mingyue of the Duo Prides, the 2nd and 3rd Sword of the Three

Swords, and 3rd to 7th Night, a total of five from the Seven Nights.

As for those from the Emperor Star Academy: Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, Jiang Xiu, Luo Huan, Luo Cheng. Luo Huan and Luo Cheng's inclusions into those that obtained recognition came as a surprise. However, the payout for their betting rates was higher, which indicated that their chances of obtaining the top nine rankings were not as great when compared to the others.

The Royal Academy: the 8th rank in the 10 prodigies, Shi Jun, as well as the little prince of Chu, Chu Chen.

Godly General Martial Palace: Hou Tie, Leng Ya

Divine Wind Academy: the 6th ranked of the 10 prodigies, Jiang Feng.

And, the 7th ranked of the 10 prodigies, Ye Zhi, as well as the 9th ranked of the 10 prodigies, Kuang Sheng.

Ye Zhi, was the adopted daughter of the Ye Clan; as for Kuang Sheng, he was a student belonging to the Frenzied Sabre Sect, a faction of power in the Royal Capital.

These listed people, if one were to ignore Luo Huan and Luo Cheng, made a total of 18. And for those that were more observant, they would realised that these 18 people just happened to be split into pairs based on each of the towering platforms.

And at this moment, on the towering platform furthest from the Emperor Seat, which was also the platform nearest to the spectators stand, a silhouette abruptly appeared, creating a huge commotion.

“Qin Wentian also came to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet, registering for the 9th towering platform.”

Chu Tianjiao shifted his gaze, an expression of interest appearing in his eyes.

“Qin Wentian.” Upon witnessing the appearance of Qin Wentian, Ye WuQue involuntarily glanced at the father and daughter pair standing behind his Ye Clan.

Over at the Mo Clan, a smile could be seen on Mo Qingcheng’s face, as she whispered, “Gambatte.”

“Qingcheng, I heard that you have been pretty close with that little fellow from the Qin Clan recently.” At this moment, a middle aged figure beside Mo Qingcheng intoned in a low voice, causing Mo Qingcheng’s expression to go rigid. She laughed. “Didn’t you all say that in the past, the Mo Clan and the Qin Clan had a extremely close relationship? I clicked well with Qin Wentian, and thus, we naturally became friends.”

“Oh, is that really the case?” The middle aged figure smiled in response at his daughter.

“What are you thinking about?” A reddish tinge of color involuntarily appeared on her face as Mo Qingcheng saw her father looking at her. This caused her to look incomparably captivating, a peerless beauty that could even overthrow empires!

TN Note: hahahhahahahahaha

Hou Tie侯铁 – Hou Iron

Leng Ya冷牙 – Cold Teeth

Shi Jun 石俊 – Handsome Stone

Kuang Sheng 狂生 – Mad Life

AGM 118 – A Year Is Too Long

Luo Qianqiu, the Ye Clan, Ou Clan, Mu Clan, and Yan Clan all saw Qin Wentian, but they were each thinking about different things.

Although it could be said that Qin Wentian's strength was pretty good, as he'd defeated Yanaro in the past before, he still seemed to be unable to obtain any ranking in this Jun Lin Banquet.

“He's Qin Wentian, right?” From the direction of the Mu Clan, an elder asked Mu Rou standing next to him in a low voice as he looked at Qin Wentian's portrait.

“Yes.” Mu Rou lightly nodded, a flash of extraordinary splendour flickering in her gaze towards Qin Wentian. That divine inscription painting granted her a promise from Gong Yang Hong. At the moment, she had yet to personally voice her thanks to Qin Wentian.

However, Mu Rou was also somewhat concerned. The competition at the Jun Lin Banquet couldn't just be compared to those simple exchanges of pointers. The Chu Country had always been a cultivation-oriented world, and at this grandest arena of the Chu Country, everyone wanted to fight for a good ranking. Thus, these fights would be extremely brutal; injuries and deaths were very common. However, if one side conceded, the other side would have to give up.

Moreover, as long as the words “I concede” weren't uttered, one

could be merciless and kill their opponent right there in Jun Lin. This wasn't any uncommon or strange sight.

It didn't matter which academy or which power's outstanding youth it was, if they died in battle because they refused to admit defeat, the opponent couldn't be blamed.

Autumn Snow obviously saw that figure. She'd always had an issue weighing heavily in her mind because her partner that she'd always wanted to break off her engagement with was now gradually growing more and more distant from her.

"He's probably just attending the Jun Lin Banquet just to join in the fun." Autumn Snow thought, as if comforting herself.

"He just plays a supporting role. Any disciples that participate in this Jun Lin Banquet end up being humiliated by the others, where's the interest in that?" Bai Qingsong calmly stated, as if he was purposely telling Autumn Snow. Obviously he knew of her internal, conflicting thoughts because he also had a similar issue.

Jiang Xiu's gaze at this moment was as sharp as a sword. Qin Wentian registered for the 9th towering platform, the same as himself.

This meant that the both of them had an opportunity to clash with each other.

And upon thinking of this, a cold smile hung on Jiang Xiu's

countenance. He hoped that Qin Wentian would have sufficient strength so as not be eliminated too early, before having the opportunity to meet with him.

Yanaro, also had an icy-cold expression on his face. He had also registered for the 9th towering platform.

Very quickly, people stopped walking towards the 9th platform. Those who wished to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet had already finished their registrations, and there were at least over a 100 contestants registered for each of the towering platforms.

Naturally, the platform with the lowest number of registrations was the 1st platform. The two cultivators that obtained the highest level of recognition – Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, were already there. Who would still dare to register there? When compared to the other platforms, the 1st platform virtually held no hope for them.

In the area occupied by the Divine Weapon Pavilion, the person who sat on the front-most seat attracted the most attention. That lady appeared to be 25-26 years of age, possessing beauty and emanating the sense of a mature women, making her extremely attractive. This was none other than the vice-president of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, An Liuyan.

At that moment, An Liuyan lightly smiled as she looked at the nine platforms and said, “The 18 people that obtained the highest level of recognition were split so well. Coincidentally, each platform only contains 2 people, as if they have some tacit agreement.”

“This way, others can be tested. If one wants to break through the nine platforms, they must pass over these guys.” The nearby Yang Chen smiled in reply. “That guy, Qin Wentian, his level of strength would count as somewhat weak amongst the people on the 9th platform. Over there, the 10th ranked of the 10 prodigies, Jiang Xiu, and the 7th Night of the Seven Nights were there as well. Compared to the other platforms, I feel that the 9th platform should be the easiest place to obtain victory.”

“You’re making a mistake there.”

An Liuyan smiled, “It’s precisely because everyone thinks this platform is easiest to break through that some rather powerful people will register for it. For example, Emperor Star Academy’s Luo Chen isn’t weak, and Yanaro broke through the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, so his strength should be decent as well. Thus, I actually think that the competition on the ninth platform will be the fiercest.”

“I hadn’t actually considered that. Our Divine Weapon Pavilion doesn’t know much about these youths. However, other powerful figures can probably easily see through these clues, right?” Yang Chen laughed. But at that moment, he saw the person standing next to Chu Tianjiao once again open his mouth, “Would the Nine Martial Academies send their appointed representatives out?”

Within the Nine Martial Academies respectively, a total of nine representatives stood up, and they soared through the skies, landing on each of the towering platforms.

The representatives of the Nine Martial Academies would serve as the judges of each of the platforms, and was responsible to choose which contestants were to participate in each battle.

“Is it finally beginning soon?” In the spacious Chu Emperor District, countless gazes were trained on the nine towering platforms.

The spectators didn’t seem care too much about the delicacies and wine served at the grand banquet. Instead, their attention and anticipation were on their students instead, hoping that they would be able to perform outstandingly and achieve a good result.

“The 1st platform, Luo Qianqiu versus Hiryu.”

“The 2nd platform, The 2nd Sword versus Bai Ming.”

“The 3rd platform, the 3rd Night versus Wang Xiao.”

The Three Swords and Seven Nights from the Snowcloud Country did not use their real names for the registration. Instead, they chose to use their namesakes, as Swords and Nights instead.

The gazes of the spectators shifted together with the commotion, and very quickly, their gazes landed onto the judge of the 9th towering platform. Jiang Xiu adopted an extremely eager stance, as though he couldn’t wait to battle. According to the all the eight towering platforms before him, the first name shouted out, was the name that obtained the highest level of recognition. If that was

the case, on the 9th towering platform, the name shouted out should be him by right.

“The 9th platform, Jiang Xiu versus Qin Wentian.”

And as the sound of that voice faded, it cause the countenance of Jiang Xiu to freeze as he cast his glance towards the judge of the 9th platform. The first name the judge shouted, was indeed Jiang Xiu, but who would have thought that, his opponent would actually be, Qin Wentian.

“Qin..Wen..Tian.” After being shocked for a moment, the corners of Jiang Xiu’s lips curled up into an icy smile.

This was the first battle of the Jun Lin Banquet. This year was the first time Jiang Xiu stood upon the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet. Similarly, this was also the first time for Qin Wentian.

Wouldn’t it be an interesting sight if a genius divine inscription grandmaster, in addition to being a talented cultivator that was admired by countless people, got struck down by the cruel reality of the arena during his first battle?

Qin Wentian was also stunned, and a light flickered in his eyes. Glancing in the direction of the 9th platform’s judge, he couldn’t help but think: did this fellow do this on purpose?

To think that a member of the 10 prodigies was actually going to start off the first battle. Although Jiang Xiu was ranked last among

the prodigies, no one could doubt his strength.

The crowd was also dumbfounded. The names of Jiang Xiu and Qin Wentian were like thunderbolts roaring through their ears, both of them were extremely famous.

One was one of the 10 prodigies, while the other was the most talented divine inscription grandmaster in the Royal Capital, who was also known to have an exceptionally high level of martial prowess.

They would clash in the first round. The battle of the 9th platform instantly attracted even more attention from the crowd than the 1st platform did.

At this moment, many were thinking that maybe this time round, Qin Wentian was treating the Jun Lin Banquet as a training session. Could it be that the first battle was going to end just like that? If that's the case, wasn't that too laughable?

That judge seemed to have a sense of wicked humor. However, no one commented too much on it. After all, the competition in the Jun Lin Banquet would be determined by one's level of strength, and the judges had the authority to select whichever contestants they wanted.

“Remember, safety first.” Qin Yao didn't have the same thoughts as others, as she straightened the clothings of Qin Wentian, smiling in encouragement. She didn't care whether Qin Wentian won or lost, but only about his safety.

“Do your best, don’t disappoint us.” Luo Huan laughed. This battle had an immense amount of pressure riding on it.

“Boss, it’s all up to you now.” Fan Le parted his lips in a grin. Currently, Heaven’s Wonder had not released the betting rates for Qin Wentian, and even if they did, there wouldn’t be many people betting on Qin Wentian. Fatty was waiting, waiting for Qin Wentian to finish his first battle. But who would have thought that his chance would come so fast? As long as Qin Wentian defeated Jiang Xiu, the people at Heaven’s Wonder would naturally compute the rates for betting on Qin Wentian.

“I will do my best.” Qin Wentian smiled as he walked towards the 9th platform. An instant later, he stood on top of the arena that was the 9th platform.

Jiang Xiu similarly ascended the platform, appearing in front of Qin Wentian.

18 elites concurrently ascended the nine towering platforms of the Jun Lin Banquet.

And starting from this moment, the Jun Lin Banquet, a new chapter would begin.

Mo Qingcheng, Mu Rou, Yanaro, Ye Clan, Ou Clan, Bai Clan, Divine Weapon Pavilion, and Star River Association, were all focusing their gazes on the two figures atop the ninth platform. Would Qin Wentian be eliminated out in the first round?

The corners of Jiang Xiu's mouth curled up in amusement. He'd just recently crossed swords with Qin Wentian. Although Qin Wentian had some amount of strength, he definitely wouldn't have a chance against him in the case of a true battle.

"Qin Wentian, on this kind of stage under the watches of thousands, a so-called genius like you will be eliminated in the first round of the first set of battles. Isn't that extremely amusing?" Jiang Xiu calmly said.

Qin Wentian didn't reply, and instead just lifted his head to look up at the sky above.

The sun was rising from the east, gradually getting higher and higher, until everyone could feel its brilliant rays.

The youth that came from Sky Harmony City had experienced many hardships and near death situations, finally coming to participate in Chu Country's Jun Lin Banquet. Today, was the day that the Chu Country would feel his radiance.

Today, in front of the face of the whole of Chu Country, he would obtain a name for himself.

Mustang had once told him that his time to shine would be the following year.

However, a year was too long. He wanted to fight for the present.

Today, he stood here, not for any other reason other than striving to be number one.

Right now, the youth's heart seemed to be blazing as passionately as the sun!

AGM 119 – When The Sword Is Birthed, Blood Appears

Qin Wentian stood there, his head raised to look at the empty sky. The youth's elegant face was calm and indifferent, with the slightest hint of a sunny smile. It seemed like he carried with him a strong sense of self-confidence.

The sun's brilliant rays reflected off of his handsome face, strengthening his looks. At the moment, this youth seemed to possess an extraordinary charm.

“Such a handsome fellow.” Currently, from the direction of the Mo Clan, Mo Qingcheng's father couldn't help but smile as he saw the youth's glowing face. “The Qin Clan had such a son, it's rather rare to encounter a youth who managed to walk through trials and hardships with his own strength and hard work, to finally stand here on Chu Country's largest stage. I hope that he can bring about a miracle.”

The Mo Clan gave their blessings to Qin Wentian.

“He will.” Mo Qingcheng gently smiled. Right now, Qin Wentian was really quite good-looking.

When the crowd saw Qin Wentian still smiling as before, they couldn't help but show strange expressions. Could it be that he really didn't care about being blasted off from the first battle and completely disappearing from the Jun Lin Banquet's stage?

Or could it be said that since he was ignorantly self-confident, he believed that he could defeat Jiang Xiu, one of the 10 prodigies in the Royal Capital?

Just then, a burst of sound rang out from the first platform. Luo Qianqiu had defeated his opponent with a single punch, but because the opponent hadn't taken the initiative to concede, he was sent flying straight backwards with the sound of thunder. All the bones in his body broke, and his meridians were destroyed. It was an extremely miserable situation.

This was the fastest battle. Luo Qianqiu had only allowed the opposite party to keep his life. His hegemonic attitude seemed to be making a declaration to everyone watching.

This year's Jun Lin Banquet was his stage.

While at the same time, on the 9th platform, the aura around Jiang Xiu's body exploded forth as fierce Sword Qi gave frenzied roars as a sword condensed from Astral Energy appeared in his hand.

On the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, one was naturally not allowed to use Divine Weapons for the sake of fairness.

The raging wind of the sword shook the void as the Sword-type Astral Soul of Jiang Xiu was released. At the same moment, the sword intent emanated by him soared and surged crazily, becoming many times more violent.

An ear-piercing sound echoed out as the aura of Jiang Xiu rose to the peak.

“This.....” Even from so far away, the crowd could still feel the relentlessly surging Sword Qi and aura of Jiang Xiu as their hearts lightly trembled.

Jiang Xiu had not started to battle yet, but he had already released the strongest aura he could, not bothering to save his strength to fight a protracted battle. His actions showed his self-confidence, and at the same time, he was making a statement to Qin Wentian. In front of him, Jiang Xiu, Qin Wentian’s talent was nothing but rubbish.

He wanted to use the strongest, most tyrannical strength he could muster, to directly smash Qin Wentian apart. He was Jiang Xiu, one of the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital. That day, the humiliation he suffered back at the Emperor Star Academy – he would return all of it today.

“You can now make a choice. Either you screw off from this stage that does not belong to you yourself, or I will do it for you.”

Jiang Xiu calmly spoke, as though he had the intention to humiliate Qin Wentian.

Within Qin Wentian’s body, all seven of his circular arterial pathways were seething and surging with Astral Energy. His aura similarly soared upwards explosively.

“After today, the name Jiang Xiu will no longer exist within the 10 prodigies.” Qin Wentian’s voice slowly rolled out, containing a calmness and an absolute confidence.

This kind of self-confidence was something the crowd didn’t expect. No one would have thought that Qin Wentian would still be able to so indifferently make a proud claim when facing off against one of the 10 prodigies. After today, the name Jiang Xiu will no longer exist within the 10 prodigies.

“The 7th level of Arterial Circulation.”

In the area where the Emperor Star Academy was sitting, Mustang displayed a smile on his face as he felt the intensity of the aura emanating from Qin Wentian’s body. Truthfully speaking, he was slightly ashamed; this student was such an outstanding talent, but he had never directly guided Qin Wentian on anything. Qin Wentian already possessed his own cultivation arts, and as for innate techniques, he had also mastered them on his own, without any need of his guidance.

This made Mustang feel rather depressed. He understood that this implied that his strength was nowhere near enough to guide this disciple. It was because he couldn’t manage a talent like Qin Wentian that this kind of situation had occurred.

Of course, Mustang was proud of Qin Wentian. This was the disciple he’d scouted from the Sky Harmony City.

Was Qin Wentian planning to announce that he existed to the entire Chu Country today?

Mustang looked forward to it, but he was also somewhat nervous. Could Qin Wentian defeat Jiang Xiu?

The spectators could all sense that Qin Wentian's aura was rather abnormal. It was said that when he'd first entered Emperor Star Academy, he'd only been in the Body Refinement Realm. To think that within a short period of a year, he'd already entered the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. In addition to his achievements in Divine Inscriptions, even if he didn't perform very well in the Jun Lin Banquet, nobody would question his abilities much. That was for certain.

He was already outstanding enough.

The fact that Qin Wentian had already broken through to the 7th level of Arterial Circulation also affected Ye Zhan, Liu Yan, Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow.

Ye Zhan had sought to kill Qin Wentian before. But at the moment, they were no longer at the same level. Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow also knew for a fact that one year ago, Qin Wentian wasn't even at the Body Refinement Realm.

In reality, Qin Wentian had only just started his cultivation.

The other battles quickly came to their conclusions. However,

many didn't notice that there wasn't a platform that could attract attention on the level of the battle at the 9th towering platform.

Not only because both of the contestants were famous, Jiang Xiu's pride and Qin Wentian's confidence also had something to do with it.

Under the attention of all, Jiang Xiu's body erupted into motion. In that instant, his sword was as cold as ice, and in a moment, he already appeared in front of Qin Wentian. With a slight wave of his sword, his sword transformed into waves of a meteor shower, brightening up the whole sky, resplendent and magnificent.

"Meteor Shower, Jiang Xiu's Starpoint swordplay has already reached such a level. With a single sword, he sealed the escape routes of Qin Wentian, and caged him within that area. No wonder he is one of the 10 prodigies." The spectators observed the points of Astral Light that emitted from Jiang Xiu's swordplay as expressions of admiration appeared on their faces.

The 10 prodigies were all fully deserving of their reputations. Since they could enter the ranks of the '10 prodigies', they had all proven their abilities before.

Qin Wentian didn't move. He simply stood there undisturbed, as if what had appeared before him wasn't a life-threatening sword light.

His expression was as calm as it was before, and unexpectedly, no weapon coalesced from Astral Light appeared in his hand. This

scene surprised many people. Was this self-confidence or arrogance?

A hint of murderous intent flashed in Jiang Xiu's eyes, Since Qin Wentian wanted to bring upon his own destruction, he'd wholeheartedly grant this wish.

Even if Emperor Star Academy wanted to protect Qin Wentian, they wouldn't be able to say anything if he died on the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet.

The sword light that filled the air carried with it a terrifying murderous aura. Rays of sword light pierced forwards at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian obviously sensed that Jiang Xiu had begun to act with the intent to kill.

At the moment, Qin Wentian's sensory abilities raised to their peak. A stunning energy pervaded the air; this was Dream Presence.

Sword-type Astral Souls would enable one's Astral Energy to be as sharp as swords; Lightning-type Astral Souls would allow one's Astral Energy to contain the explosiveness of thunder and lightning, while Dream-type Astral Souls would naturally contained dream wills within them.

In that instant, Jiang Xiu felt as though he wasn't real. It was like his sword's attacks were somewhat similar to illusions.

But Qin Wentian was different. This was his energy. With his Dream Presence released, he was in his own domain, and could sense everything. At the same time, he could also sense clearly the attacks of that meteor shower covering the sky.

Every sword attack in that meteor shower was so cold to the point that it could pierce the bones, easily able to take lives.

However, Qin Wentian's sensory abilities were so great that it was as though he had already seen through the trajectory and secrets of each and every sword contained within. Qin Wentian finally began to move.

Qin Wentian's entire body transformed into a blur of shadows, becoming an indiscernible mist.

Not only that, every steps of his was small and precise, easily and somewhat miraculously making his way through the area inundated by the meteor shower of Jiang Xiu.

It was as though no sword could come into contact with his body.

As the spirit moves, the body moves along with it.

“The Nine Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique, skill level: Divine.” An elder from the Emperor Star Academy, froze. This skill level had already exceeded the ‘Perfect’ stage.

“It seems like the level of comprehension this person has towards

innate techniques has been masked by his talent in other aspects.” The hearts of the crowd silently speculated. This technique was one that almost no one would choose to cultivate in, but to think that Qin Wentian had actually mastered the Arterial Circulation level manual of the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limit.

The meteor shower that sealed the entire area was actually of no effect, and was unable to touch the slightest bit of Qin Wentian’s body.

After stepping into the ‘Divine Level’, his movements were too perfect. One could even say without exaggeration that in the whole of the Jun Lin Banquet, the movement technique of Qin Wentian was unparalleled, and no one could be mentioned in the same breath as him.

Jiang Xiu’s expression changed, and with a flash of understanding, he changed his move. His sword intent continued to soar explosively.

However, during the instant his move changed, Qin Wentian’s body erupted into motion once again. He stamped down on the ground, and Astral Energy circulated through his meridians and infused into his legs. In that moment, his body instantly appeared in front of Jiang Xiu, the speed of it so frightening that Jiang Xiu felt that it was surreal.

In that moment, Jiang Xiu decisively made a determined and wise decision; he threw his sword away.

His sword was directly transformed into starlight and disappeared. At the same time, his right palm slashed out, its sharpness comparable to that of a real sword. If it landed on Qin Wentian's body, it would undoubtedly slice him in half.

“Slashing Sword Technique, although this isn't any amazing ability, the timing of its use was impeccable. Jiang Xiu's ability to adapt to changes in battle in an instant is really powerful.” Many people couldn't help but sigh in praise. The onlookers were all people that had witnessed many things, and thus, they recognised and had even come into contact with many of these ordinary innate techniques.

Buzz! The Falling Mountain Palms which Qin Wentian had been storing exploded out. The sword emphasized sharpness, and was only suitable for fighting at a certain distance. And when in such close proximity combat, the explosiveness of the Falling Mountain Palms was definitely extremely terrifying.

In an instant, it was as though a mountain peak smashed downwards towards Jiang Xiu, easily destroying the sharp sword intent of his sword palms.

The strength of Qin Wentian's Falling Mountain Palms was so powerful that the intensity of the pressure even caused Jiang Xiu to feel suffocated. How could someone at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation execute such a powerful Falling Mountain Palm?

Pressuring everything, eradicating all that stood in its path. This

caused Jiang Xiu to feel as though he was in a dream.

Jiang Xiu retreated decisively while he gathered his terrifying strength. In the next instant, boundless sword lights gathered together, transforming into the manifestation of a gigantic sword, stabbing forwards in the direction of the Mountain Peak created by the Falling Mountain Palms.

A great sound rang out as the greatsword's chop landed on the descending Falling Mountain Palm. The manifestation of that greatsword was embedded within, but yet, Jiang Xiu had no way to fully break it apart. This caused Jiang Xiu's movement to instantly slow, and just that instant was already sufficient to determine victory and defeat.

Qin Wentian's brandished his palms. In an instant, it was as though a beam of sword light flashed past. And together with the sword light, a bloody glow appeared.

"The sword contained a killing intent, I will break the arm that you wielded the sword with."

As soon as Qin Wentian said this, Jiang Xiu cried out miserably. His body continued to stagger backwards as his left hand clutched his right arm. Fresh blood endless flowed and dripped onto the stage. That single arm fell to the ground.

Silence was everywhere.

“The sword contained a killing intent, I will break the arm that you wielded the sword with!”

After today, the name Jiang Xiu disappeared totally from within the ranks of the 10 prodigies.

However, Qin Wentian wasn't even proficient in swordplay, how had he managed to manifest that swordlight?

AGM 120 – The Name Of Qin Wentian

Everyone's gazes were focused on the ninth platform in the Jun Lin Banquet.

The conclusion of this battle was undoubtedly shocking.

In this short confrontation, the tenth ranked Jiang Xiu of the top ten prodigies had had his arm chopped off by Qin Wentian's slash. Just as Qin Wentian had said, Jiang Xiu's name would never be part of the top ten prodigies again.

Who said that Qin Wentian had only attended this Jun Lin Banquet as a learning experience? He'd only fought one battle, but he already seemed to want to announce to Chu Country that a year was too long. This year's Jun Lin Banquet would be the time he'd release his own radiance.

Using this fight, he proclaimed to all who the real king of this ninth platform was.

Jiang Xiu was the one that had obtained the most recognition, someone that was able to enter into the top 9 rankings of the Jun Lin Banquet. To think that he was eliminated in just a single round...and what was even more devastating was that he had gotten an arm chopped off. What mockery was this?

The people from Emperor Star Academy recalled that previously, Jiang Xiu had wanted to humiliate Qin Wentian at the gathering held at Emperor Star Monuments, claiming that his current

achievements had been a result of fortuitous events. He, who was one of the top ten prodigies, had totally looked down on Qin Wentian's achievements back then.

However, in the short period of a month, the person he'd questioned had chopped off one of his arms with a mere few attacks in a single battle, on the grandest stage of Chu.

How could the reputation of the top ranked among the new students of Emperor Star Academy be false? Not only that, many predicted that from today onwards, Qin Wentian's talent would undergo a re-evaluation. What could the reputation of being the top ranked among the new students count for?

This glory didn't seem to be anywhere near enough.

On the spectator's stand, some powerful figures were secretly analysing the battle earlier. In some sense, Jiang Xiu hadn't really been able to unleash his full strength before his arm had been chopped off. Qin Wentian had controlled the rhythm of the battle at an extremely rapid pace, it had really been too perfect. Although Jiang Xiu had taken the initiative to attack, the instant the Garuda Movement Technique was utilised, the conclusion had already been firmly held in Qin Wentian's control.

Although Jiang Xiu's sword technique was very powerful, he had been given no chance to use it. The rhythm of the fight had been fully controlled by Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian was like a natural born combatant. He had an

extremely acute sense of timing, able to seize that specific instant of opportunity and obtain victory. This kind of talent was indeed somewhat terrifying.

However, nobody understood the last sword attack that Qin Wentian had made earlier.

Those powerful and influential people that investigated Qin Wentian had never heard that he was proficient in sword techniques before. However, the timing of the instant he'd chopped off Jiang Xiu's arm just now couldn't have possibly be done with a palm or fist type technique. Only a sword-type innate technique could be so sharp and fast.

Actually, in terms of the level of understanding and regarding the relationship between innate techniques and Divine Imprints, and simultaneously being able to condense Divine Yuan Energy with the Divine Imprints, it wasn't strange for Qin Wentian to know how to execute simple sword techniques. He was too familiar with Divine Inscriptions, and only needed an instant to convert the Astral Energy in his body into the runic outlines of a sword-imprint. He could then blast forth with a power similar to that of sword-type innate techniques.

While this was hard for anyone else to imagine, it was extremely simple for Qin Wentian.

Actually, he wasn't even thinking about the sword light from before. At the moment, he was calmly regarding Jiang Xiu, just like the time when he had just ascended the platform, tranquil and indifferent, as though he'd performed a simple and insignificant

task.

He knew exactly what his objective for joining the Jun Lin Banquet this year was. Defeating Jiang Xiu was indeed not something worth being very proud of, especially since the victory hadn't been when Jiang Xiu was in his strongest state.

“Is there still a need to fight?” Qian Wentian serenely asked. He didn't go and try to humiliate Jiang Xiu any further; that beam of sword light manifested by him earlier spoke more than any words could.

Jiang Xiu's face was drained and pale, and blood continued to ceaselessly flow from his remaining arm.

He was Jiang Xiu, one of the top ten prodigies. Today, Jun Lin Banquet was supposed to be the place he show off the dazzling radiance of his talent.

But the most lamentable part was that on this year's Jun Lin Banquet stage, during his only chance to battle, he had ended up losing an arm.

Because the sword in his hand had killing intent, Qin Wentian decided to sever the hand holding the sword. This immense disgrace was still making his body tremble, especially when he saw how calm and expressionless Qin Wentian's eyes were. What else could Jiang Xiu say? Did he still have the face to say anything?

Jiang Xiu turned and walked off the platform. When he had first started, he had been filled with eagerness and high-spirits; only God knew how much he had anticipated the coming of this Jun Lin Banquet.

However, he had only fought one battle.

Qin Wentian gazed at the Jiang Xiu's back, and a smile appeared on his face. He lifted his head, slightly glancing at the sun covering the sky, before shifting his gaze to the person sitting atop the Azure Jadeite Dragon Seat.

When the crowd saw this scene, their countenances froze in shock. Qin Wentian seemed as about to say something.

“Sky Harmony City, Qin Residence, son of Qin Chuan. My name is Qin Wentian!”

With a glittering smile on his face, Qin Wentian slowly enunciated each syllable. It was unknown who was his intended audience was and why he'd chosen to say this.

He was Qin Wentian, the son of Qin Chuan from the Qin Clan.

This seemed to be a proclamation of sorts.

Chu TianJiao saw the gaze of Qin Wentian landing on him, with

an expression as tranquil as water. Was Qin Wentian trying to tell him something?

Qin Wentian wanted to use the Jun Lin Banquet to prove himself, and make it so that no one would dare to lightly touch Qin Wu and Qin Chuan.

Being weak, puny, and silently enduring wouldn't allow others to notice your existence. Only with great talent and power, would others fear you. Not only that, strength and talent would only bring him more powerful supports, such as the Emperor Star Academy and the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

Naturally, this was also a double-edged sword. While radiating your dazzling brilliance, there may be swords hiding, stabbing at you from the dark.

Qin Wentian turned and departed from the platform. Although there had only been one battle on the grand stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, it was as though he had allowed others to re-evaluate him, and let them know who he was once again.

That youth who once stood in the midst of a snowstorm had a determination and will that far surpassed others.

“When did you learn that sword-type innate technique?” Luo Huan laughed as she looked at the approaching Qin Wentian. An extraordinary splendour could be seen in her eyes.

“I’ve known that technique since the moment I was born.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders as he laughed.

“Your skin has thickened.” Luo Huan’s smile was exceptionally radiant. This junior brother of hers had, in the short span of a year of time, created so many unimaginable miracles.

Back when she’d been in Sky Harmony City that day to save Qin Wentian, she had never imagined that he would be this successful today, after a year had passed.

“Wentian, although your movement technique is extremely powerful, you were too close to the sword. In the future, you have to fight more carefully.” Qin Yao told Qin Wentian. Although Qin Wentian’s movement technique was indeed amazing, she couldn’t help but worry. After all, each sword light in the meteor shower of swords that had filled the sky earlier carried a terrifying killing power.

If Jiang Xiu’s strength was a bit just a bit stronger, he’d be able to execute an attack that Qin Wentian couldn’t have possibly dodged. Close combat at that proximity was just too dangerous.

“Don’t worry, sister.” Qin Wentian cupped Qin Yao’s face in his hands causing Qin Yao to glare at him. However, a warmth blossomed in her heart because of the words Qin Wentian spoken onstage earlier.

“Where’s that Fan Le?” Qin Wentian couldn’t help but to ask as he realised that Fan Le was missing.

“He went to Drunken Wonder to bet on you.” Luo Huan involuntarily blinked her eyes when Fan Le was mentioned. That fellow was a prodigy. When he saw Qin Wentian had won against Jiang Xiu, he’d immediately run off to the branch of Heaven’s Wonder, Drunken Wonder, to place his bets.

“Genius.” Qin Wentian rolled his eyes. This Fatty was really full of ideas.

The battles atop the nine platforms were still continuing, and would for a very long time. Because Qin Wentian had already fought a round, there was plenty of resting time. They wouldn’t be able to advance to the next stage until the people at each platform was done fighting.

Although the judges had the authority to pick on whichever contestants they wanted to battle, they had to take into consideration of the number of times a contestant would fight on stage. It was impossible to deliberately target and constantly send a particular contestant on stage to fight battle after battle continuously. If that was the case, the fairness of the rules would be called into question.

Sikong Mingyue, the 2nd Sword, 3rd Sword, and the 5th Night from the Snowcloud Country, showcased their prowess respectively, and still had yet to meet their match. They were most likely still conserving part of their strength, so it was impossible to tell exactly how strong their combat abilities were.

After all, a dark horse like Qin Wentian was extremely rare, smashing one of the 10 prodigies down just by his first battle.

After the first round of battles, the crowd gained a deeper understanding of the battles at the nine towering platforms. Contrary to what they'd assumed, the 9th platform that had appeared the easiest to gain victory over, had had the most intense battles with many hidden elites.

Even though many of the other contestants were still cloaked in shadows, Qin Wentian, who had defeated Jiang Xiu, had a high probability of being one of the two remaining contestants on the 9th platform.

Although the 7th Night was a female, her martial prowess was extremely powerful as well, easily defeating another outstanding opponent.

Luo Cheng also only used a single move before chopping down an arm of his opponent, causing people to exclaim silently about the ferociousness of a member of the Asura Faction.

Other than them, there were still other powerful elites on the 9th platform. Luo Kaiyang, from the Divine Wind Academy, also had outstanding martial prowess. The first opponent he'd defeated was also someone that had obtained a high level of recognition, yet Luo Kaiyang had easily eliminated his opponent, leaving behind a deep impression in the minds of the spectators.

Only two would remain standing on the 9th platform at the end

of the battle. This meant that these people would clash against one another sooner or later, and naturally, the weaker one would be eliminated.

Luo Kaiyang at this moment, was standing in the middle of a crowd. Standing beside him, was a ravishing young lady who smiled at him. “Kaiyang, based on your strength, you should have a chance.”

“Set your heart at ease, little Yue. As long as my opponent isn’t Qin Wentian, the 7th Night, and Luo Cheng, I’m not too worried. I will work hard and become one of the two victors.” Luo Kaiyang remarked. The two people he was most afraid of facing against were none other than Qin Wentian and the 7th Night.

Qin Wentian had defeated Jiang Xiu, while Luo Kaiyang knew nothing about the 7th Night’s skill level.

“Mmm.” Lin Yue smiled as she nodded. So, the ravishing young lady from the Divine Wind Academy was one of the four great beauties of the Sky Harmony City – Lin Yue.

Now that she was nearing 17, the beauty and charm she exuded was naturally more than when compared to the past. She was currently in a relationship with the young genius of Divine Wind Academy – Luo Kaiyang.

“The judges are beginning to pick the contestants.” Luo Kaiyang cast his gaze upon the platforms, and soon after, over at 9th platform, a judge’s voice loudly echoed out.

“The battle on the 9th platform, Qin Wentian versus Luo Kaiyang.”

As the voice of the judge faded, the crowd was dumbfounded, and after which, smiles could be seen appearing on the faces of several people. Was this judge doing this on purpose so as to increase the attention the 9th platform was getting? Or was it because he had hated Qin Wentian immensely?

The countenances of Lin Yue and Luo Kaiyang froze. The opponent for Luo Kaiyang's 2nd battle, was Qin Wentian!

AGM 121 – A Smile Melting Away Hatred And Grievances

“Qin Wentian.” Lin Yue’s face kept fluctuating, her countenance unsightly. How had this happened?

Based on Luo Kaiyang’s battle ability, he originally should’ve been able to get very far. She had hoped that Luo Kaiyang would encounter Qin Wentian and the other monsters as late as possible. Yet this was only the second round, and Luo Kaiyang would have to face against Qin Wentian.

“It’s Lin Yue.” Qin Yao looked at Luo Kaiyang, who was standing next to Lin Yue. Qin Wentian’s gaze also shifted over as a strange expression was displayed on his face.

A year ago when he’d still been in Sky Harmony City, he’d had some minor conflicts with Lin Yue.

“Kaiyang, you have to be more careful.” Lin Yue reminded. She also hadn’t imagined that she and Qin Wentian would still meet after a year’s time, moreover, in this kind of situation.

The people all proceeded to their respective platforms. Qin Wentian and Luo Kaiyang also went to the 9th platform.

Luo Kaiyang’s expression was filled with concentration as he looked at Qin Wentian, releasing both of his Astral Souls with no hesitation.

His first Astral Soul was actually a suit of armor, as a layer of Astral Light coated his body.

The first Astral Soul of Luo Kaiyang, was actually a defensive-type Astral Soul, which would enable his body's defensive abilities to be extremely formidable. It could even reduce vibrations from the impact from attacks.

The second Astral Soul was a bit brighter, and was a large Axe. It was a powerful attack-type Astral Soul.

Luo Kaiyang had clearly chosen his Astral Souls after much consideration. The large Axe was for attack and the armor was for defense, resulting in attack and defense combined as one; it was extremely balanced.

“Please, go ahead.” Luo Kaiyang was rather poised. With the Astral Axe in his hand, he gestured at Qin Wentian to go.

“Please...” Qin Wentian returned the gesture, and an Astral Greathammer appeared in his hand.

Luo Kaiyang was an expert in attack and defense. Since that was the case, Qin Wentian would use all out attacking as defense. After all, his Astral Soul clearly possessed an advantage over Luo Kaiyang's, it was just that his cultivation base was slightly weaker.

However, today, the crowd seemed to have already forgotten the

truth of Qin Wentian's cultivation base. They completely treated him as if he was in the 9th level of Arterial Circulation.

All because he'd defeated Jiang Xiu, one of the ten prodigies.

In this battle, Qin Wentian had won because of the advantages he had in his movement technique, as well as natural born ability to make judgments in battles. Furthermore, there was still that last, well-timed sword strike earlier. It was unknown exactly how what Qin Wentian's true level of strength was.

Hence, several of the crowd were focused on this battle. Would Qin Wentian continued to obtain victory and solidify his position in the hearts of the crowd?

Luo Kaiyang erupted into motion. Although he didn't have an agility type Astral Soul, his speed could still be considered as extremely fast.

But no matter how fast he was, his speed it still couldn't be compared to that of Qin Wentian's Garuda Movement Technique. Abruptly, a hammer filled with incomparable tyrannical force, explosively blasted downwards with a boom.

The Divine Energy within his body erupted., This source of this energy was the Astral Energy originating from the 5th Heavenly Layer that was condensed into Divine Energy. Incorporating the divine energy within his attack, a low boom reverberated along side with it as the hammer smashed down..

Luo Kaiyang wasn't to be outdone. He wildly hacked down with his Axe, executing the beginning stance of the Nine Stance of Mountain Breaker with boundless might.

“Bang!” When the two frightening forces collided into each other, the Astral Energies that gushed out transformed into a savage storm. As their gazes locked onto each other, Luo Kaiyang only felt a ray of light shooting out from Qin Wentian's eyes. And at that exact instant, he was hit by sleepiness and entered into a trance-like dream state. In that dream, it was as though Qin Wentian was an ancient giant, equipped with inexhaustible strength.

“What's going on?” Luo Kaiyang felt a will invading his consciousness, as he saw Qin Wentian's great hammer smashing down again. His Nine Stances of Mountain Breaker was in disarray and could only lift his Axe to resist.

“Bang, bang, bang...” The frenzy of attacks wildly burst out and pounded downwards, making the entire crowd of spectators freeze. How had this battle suddenly become so filled with explosive violence?

At the moment, Qin Wentian attacks wereas filled with incredible violence as he advanced, his attack speed was so fast to the point where everyone was stunned. Luo Kaiyang had lost his momentum and had no way to redeem it. Be it in terms of attack or movement speed, he was far inferior to Qin Wentian. Not only that, Luo Kaiyang's strength was insufficient to turn the tables in an instant, and he currently, had sunken into an extremely awkward position.

Upon witnessing this, the countenance of Lin Yue turned pale, as she shouted, “Kaiyang, admit defeat.”

Luo Kaiyang gritted his teeth, unwillingness apparent in his heart.. But that instant, the mountain-like greathammer came crashing down, and the Astral Great Axe in his hand dispersed upon meeting that attack.

Luo Kaiyang’s complexion turned deathly pale. And as he watched the greathammer crashing down towards him , his mind went blank. Despite his body’s powerful defense, the greathammer’s descent was enough to smash his head into pieces.

“No...” Lin Yue’s complexion was just as pale. Her eyes instantly began to redden, not daring to imagine what would happen next.

The powerful greathammer continued to descend, but then, just when it was about to collide with Luo Kaiyang’s head, it suddenly transformed into radiant starlight that filled the sky, before completely dissipating without a trace.

Time, seemed to have stopped in that instant. Beads of sweat were dripping down from Luo Kaiyang’s forehead.

His gaze was fixated on Qin Wentian, only to see a sunny smile on the countenance of his opponent. In Luo Kaiyang’s heart, he slowly accepted the fact that he wasn’t the match of Qin Wentian.

Luo Kaiyang slightly bowed to Qin Wentian as he gazed at him, “I can’t be compared to you. And I believe that your name will definitely be on the top nine rankings in the Jun Lin Banquet.”

“Thank you.” Qin Wentian nodded with a smile, as Luo Kaiyang walked off the platform. The victor of this battle was Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian watched Luo Kaiyang departed with an expression as tranquil as water. Unconsciously, he looked over in Lin Yue’s direction.

Currently, Lin Yue’s heart was palpitating wildly. When she saw the smiling youth, she suddenly felt ashamed of her own inferiority. Underneath the platform, with a great distance separating both of them, she rose from her seat and bowed towards Qin Wentian. “I’m sorry for the matters in the past.”

Qin Wentian smiled lightly as he nodded. That smile melted away any all previous feelings of hatred and grievances. Although the words of Lin Yue previously were unpleasant to the ear, Qin Wentian understood that she said that because of a moment of youthful headstrongness. It wasn’t really worth nursing the grudge.

“It looks like this girl has had conflicts with Qin Wentian before.” The people watching silently speculated at the sight.

“Using a smile to melt away feelings of hatred and grievances, not bad.” Mustang nodded with a grin from the area designated to

the Emperor Star Academy. He was becoming more and more satisfied with this student of his.

Qin Wentian exited the platform. At this moment, the crowd had already considered him as someone with the power to vie for the top nine rankings of this Jun Lin Banquet.

Luo Kaiyang's strength could actually be considered above average. But when faced against Qin Wentian, he had absolutely no way to fight back. Moreover, just as before, no one was able to see through the actual strength of Qin Wentian.

In the two battles he'd fought, the spectators had only seenaw his martial prowess. It was as though Qin Wentian was naturally born with the ability to grasp the rhythm of the battle situation perfectly.

Although those two earlier battles appeared to be rather simple, it was only because Qin Wentian was a heaven-defying genius.

As for the following battles, they were just as fascinating. Occasionally, there would be fierce collisions, but Qin Wentian didn't meet any opponent that was particularly powerful. With only the Astral Ggreathammer in his hand and his incredible movement technique, he firmly suppressed all his opponents.

Time flowed slowly. The battles at the nine towering platform gradually turned increasingly ferocious. The referees for each platform seemed to be purposely scheduling the fiercest battles at the emdlast. The 18 people that obtained the highest level of

recognition earlier whereas also put into challenging situations, but other than Jiang Xiu, none of the other 17 were eliminated,. However, although it wasn't that easy for them if they wanted to obtain victory.

Only Liu Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, the 2nd Sword, the 3rd Night, defeated their opponents with absurd ease.

The winter sun shifted from the east to the west, its warmth enshrouding the ground. At this moment, the battles on three platforms had already concluded. There were only a few other contestants left for the various remaining platforms. Not only that, to hasten the process, the judges made the remaining contestants of each respective platforms enter the platform together.

The Jun Lin Banquest's first round of combat was going to end soon.

"The 8th platform, 6th Night, Luo Huan, Ye Zhi, Yu Fei, come up together." Just then, the judge on the 8th platform instructed.

The 6th Night and Ye Zhi, who was ranked seventh among the ten prodigies, were the two of the original 18 that obtained the highest recognition. Heaven's Wonder also assigned betting rates for Luo Huan and Yu Fei, however, the odds of them entering the top nine didn't seem that high.

Follow which, if nothing unexpected happened, the 6th Night and Ye Zhi would most likeprobably deal with Luo Huan and Yu

Fei respectively.

Moreover, it was somewhat regretful that Luo Huan and Yu Fei were both from the Emperor Star Academy..

“On the 9th platform, 7th Night, Qin Wentian, Luo Cheng, come on up.”

The judge on the 9th platform slowly declared. Currently, the 9th platform only had three contestants remaining. Before this round, there were a total of six contestants and thus after defeating their respective opponents, the remaining three contestants ended up in this situation.

Following this, between the 7th Night, Qin Wentian, and Luo Cheng, one of them would have to be eliminated.

“Although the Seventh Night is a female, her martial prowess is extremely formidable, and she will most likely most likely, she should be able to advance. Luo Cheng’s sabre techniques are extremely sharp and fierce, his strength should not be below that of Jiang Xiu. He should have a 30% chance of winning if he fights against Qin Wentian.”

Involuntarily, many people silently speculated that Qin Wentian had a high chance of advancing, but if he wanted to deal with the seemingly crazed Luo Cheng, it wasn’t going to be so easy either.

The battles that occurred each time round were as closely spectated by the spectators. Naturally, they had seen Luo Cheng's level of martial prowess as well.

“The 8th platform, 6th Night versus Yu Fei, Ye Zhi versus Luo Huan. The platform is large enough to hold two battles simultaneously.” The judge on the 8th platform stated, causing a sharp glow to flicker in the eyes of the crowd. To think they would witness two such interesting showdowns at the same time.

Indeed, it was as they had expected; the 6th Night and Yu Fei were going to have a showdown between males, while the two beauties, Ye Zhi and Luo Huang, would be fighting each other. This was a highly anticipated fight.

“The 9th platform, all three of you fight together at the same time. Whoever leaves the platform first is eliminated.” A voice abruptly rang out. Expressions of interest were displayed on the faces of the spectators. Was this judge for real? He actually wanted Qin Wentian, Luo Cheng and 7th Night to engage in a battle royale!

What if, among them, two of the contestants decided to work together and eliminate the 3rd party?, Would this that even be allowed?

This judge was interesting indeed!

Maybe, he just didn't like the idea of someone advancing without fighting, and thus, he had thought of such an idea!

AGM 122 – The 18 Who Advance

7th Night, Qin Wentian, and Luo Chen stood in a triangular position, facing each other on the 9th towering platform.

7th Night was a young female that was rather pretty. The corners of her mouth were tilted upwards into a slight smile, making her extremely good-looking. However, being able to become one of Snow Cloud Country's Seven Nights at her age naturally made her strength unquestionable.

Duo Prides, Three Swords, Seven Nights. They all enjoyed the same prestige as the 10 prodigies of the Royal Capital. It was only that in the Snowcloud Country, these top elites were further segregated into more distinctive categories.

The Duo Prides had the highest amount of talent, the Three Swords were all genius Sword Users, while the Seven Nights each had their own area of speciality, and had an extremely high level of martial prowess.

“You two had better not bully a frail girl like me.”

7th Night looked at Qin Wentian and Luo Cheng with a light smile that brought out her infinite charm, causing others to be unwilling to attack her. In fact, there were many people that were easily tricked by her smile during battle.

“One of you two, leave the platform.”

Luo Cheng calmly interjected, causing 7th Night to freeze, before she smiled again and replied, “If you’re so confident, then why don’t you two men have a fight, and eliminate the other?”

Luo Cheng’s expression remained unchanged, and the aura around his body became violently sharp. The pressure of the 8th level of Arterial Circulation gushed forwards, and against all expectations, it continued to surge.

“9th level of Arterial Circulation.” The pressure Luo Cheng was releasing broke through the limits of the 8th level and stepped into the 9th level. Before this, he had hidden his real cultivation base, suppressing it to the 8th level to battle. But despite so, with his suppressed cultivation, he still managed to reach this point, leaving only himself, 7th Night, and Qin Wentian on the platform.

“No wonder Luo Cheng was so confident; with his ruthless combat methods and immense battle experiences, he could manifest such a high level of martial prowess just by using the suppressed 8th level of Arterial Circulation. Now that his full cultivation base is finally unleashed, it is needless to say that his martial prowess has risen another level as well. Naturally, it is certain that he’s now stronger than Jiang Xiu of the 10 prodigies.”

The spectators were thinking in their hearts that since that was the case, it was no wonder that Luo Cheng could be so confident. He’d even gone so far as to state that between 7th Night and Qin Wentian, one of them would be eliminated.

7th Night stuck out her tongue when she saw Luo Cheng's real cultivation base. Following which, she glanced at Qin Wentian as she smiled, "He wants us to battle, what do you think?"

"Naturally, if you ask me, both of you should engage in battle instead." Qin Wentian smiled as he replied, causing 7th Night to grimace, "Both of you men, actually have the cheek to want me to battle?"

Luo Cheng and Qin Wentian remained silent, as though they were waiting for something.

"Alright, since you guys want me to battle, then battle I shall." 7th Night appeared as though she had been wronged, as she smiled at Qin Wentian. "I choose you then. You must show me mercy, okay?"

Qin Wentian smiled but didn't reply. On the platform of the Jun Lin Banquet, he would never believe that coy smile of hers.

7th Night stepped forwards as she slowly walked in front of Qin Wentian, releasing her Astral Soul. After going through so many battles, she had never met someone that could make her feel threatened. And every time she engaged in a battle that could bring her some excitement, she had always prevailed over her opponents.

It was best not to underestimate those that had been able to reach this stage.. Not only that, 7th Night was one of the Seven Nights of Snowcloud Country.

And at this moment, Qin Wentian felt as though he was under the effect of an illusion. 7th Night's body seemed to split apart, as several clones of 7th Night appeared in his line of sight.

The moment he felt the effects of the illusion, Qin Wentian could sense the existence of danger. This was most likely the ability bestowed to 7th Night by her Astral Soul.

Qin Wentian had attempted many times to infuse the power of his Astral Soul within his innate techniques. How could he not understand what he was facing? Closing his eyes, he voluntarily relinquished his sight when facing against 7th Night.

It was then that he saw 7th Night stretching her palms out. A manifestation of an icy python flew over to Qin Wentian, seeking to devour him, moving at a speed as fast as lightning.

Qin Wentian's feet slightly wavered as he wondrously executed the Garuda Movement Technique, dodging to the side.

7th Night closely followed after Qin Wentian with an intense bout of coldness that caused Qin Wentian to involuntarily shudder.

The temperature of the surrounding air rapidly dropped as ice lances abruptly stabbed out, caging in the surrounding space in front.

Each of the ice lances emanated an aura of extreme sharpness,

and even the billowing sounds of the wind seemed to be giving a testament to the attack power of the lances.

7th Night knew that Qin Wentian was adept in controlling the rhythm of a battle. Hence, she decided to seize the initiative instead, controlling the battle by mounting ferocious attacks against Qin Wentian.

It was as though a layer of frost and snow had covered Qin Wentian's body. Earlier, when he had obtained victory against both Luo Kaiyang and Jiang Xiu, he'd only won because he had controlled the rhythm of the battle perfectly, and knew when to seize the key moments. However, his current opponent's intelligence far surpassed what he had expected. Behind that adorable smile was actually a deep, scheming heart.

The Divine Yuan Energy in his Arterial Pathways surged and seethed, as the steps of Qin Wentian shifted in direction abruptly. Stomping fiercely on the ground, he turned. With a howl of anger, the 3rd imprint of the Thousand Hands Imprint, the Forgotten Imprint, blasted out.

The terrifying palm imprint exploded forth, smashing against the ice lances, as both of the attacks dissipated into nothingness upon the collision.

Yet, the movements of 7th Night didn't cease. Her eyes sparkled with laughter as she stared at Qin Wentian. At the same time, she shifted her palms forward, as the manifestation of an icy python once again flew towards Qin Wentian.

At this moment, the closed eyes of Qin Wentian suddenly snapped open. A surge of terrifying pressure gushed out, as 7th Night, for an instant, felt her spirit shaken as she seemed to step into a dream.

Continuous waves of Revolving Sea Imprints blasted out from Qin Wentian's palm, as the terrifying aura caused 7th Night to unhesitatingly stepped back. She gave up the notion of continuing to battle, and returned to her original spot before she'd started fighting against Qin Wentian.

“Formidable, I shall not play with you any longer.”

7th Night laughed, as she looked to Luo Cheng.

“Hey, I've exchanged blows with him, shouldn't it be your turn to fight with him now? It's only fair if you do so, right?” 7th Night called out.

“This 7th Night is pretty interesting.” The spectators laughed. The feeling 7th Night gave out wasn't like that of a monstrous elite, but rather, a naive and adorable young lady.

Luo Cheng gazed shifted and landed onto Qin Wentian. As he walked towards Qin Wentian, a curved sabre created from Astral Light appeared in his hands.

As he lunged forward, the sabre in his hands remained

motionless. Without using any innate techniques, the distance between Luo Cheng and Qin Wentian got shorter and shorter.

Seizing the initiative to control others was a standard tactic in battle. However, at this moment, both Luo Cheng and Qin Wentian had yet to execute any innate techniques. But of course, this also indicated that they could still intentionally change their moves to match their opponent.

Looking at the seemingly unconcerned Qin Wentian, Luo Cheng's eyebrows twitched as his gaze became as sharp as swords.

His sabre was finally unleashed. However, it wasn't so simple as a direct chop. Instead, his sabre unexpectedly slashed from downwards to upwards at a strange angle. This path of attack was exceedingly tough to defend against. If Qin Wentian wished to avoid this attack, he would have to intentionally dislocate some of the bones in his body.

"Buzz." A raging wind billowed by only to see the body of Qin Wentian soaring into the skies. At the same time, the energy he stored in his palms also blasted out. With his perfect set of Stellar Meridians, the smoothness of the energy flow of his attacks were ferocious and beyond comparison.

"What the?" The countenances of the crowd froze, as they seemed to see a faint illusion of a pair of Garuda Wings on the back of Qin Wentian's body. This fellow had definitely condensed his Garuda's Mark successfully, and must have hunted countless numbers of flying-type demonic beasts before he could achieve such a state.

The countenance of Luo Cheng also wavered slightly. His stance made it seem as if he were about to split apart everything, and he slashed out his sabre through the air. Abruptly, a thunderous roar out as Luo Cheng stumbled.

“Boom.”

A palm landed behind Luo Cheng, on his back. Instantly, his whole body was encased by a layer of ice. His countenance paled as an expression of unwillingness flashed in his eyes.

“Oops, do you admit defeat?” 7th Night laughed gaily as she spoke. Luo Cheng shivered violently from the cold, as Qin Wentian stood in front of him, calmly regarding him, not taking the opportunity to deliver an attack.

Luo Cheng naturally understood that he no longer had the option to choose.

“I admit defeat.” Luo Cheng spoke, as 7th Night released him, removing her palm. Luo Cheng regained the use of his body, and had an unsightly countenance upon his face.

Turning his head, he glanced at 7th Night. “Is there any meaning behind using such underhanded techniques to achieve victory?”

“Naturally. This way, I can proceed to the next round and fight with even stronger opponents. How could there be no meaning to

this?” 7th Night continued laughing, causing Luo Cheng to be speechless.

Filled with unwillingness, Luo Cheng walked off the platform.

And thus on the 9th platform, the two people that successfully advanced were Qin Wentian and 7th Night.

“Hey, if we meet again as opponents next round, I won’t hold back, okay?” 7th Night looked towards Qin Wentian as she laughed gaily.

The corners of Qin Wentian’s mouth twitched with suppressed laughter as he nodded. “I’ll wait for you.”

“Okay.” 7th Night smiled, as she shifted her gaze towards the 8th platform.

At this moment, the battle between 6th Night and Yu Fei had ended. 6th Night was the victor.

And unexpectedly, in the battle between Luo Huan and Ye Zhi, Luo Huan was the victorious one.

“Indeed, those from the Emperor Star Academy can’t be underestimated. It was a pity about Luo Cheng. And the battle between Yu Fei and the 6th Night was exceptionally intense. To think that Luo Huan actually hid her strength and won against the 7th prodigy – Ye Zhi.” Many people silently sighed. They were still

immensely shocked from the earlier battle between Luo Huan and Ye Zhi.

Ye Zhi, who was ranked 7th among the 10 prodigies, naturally was not weak in combat. But the fact was as such, she had still been defeated by Luo Huan.

As for the reason behind her defeat, the spectators was very clear about this as well. The dual Astral Soul of Luo Huan, was not simple indeed.

At this moment, the remaining 18 that advanced had all appeared. The identities of most of those that had advanced fell within the crowd's earlier predictions. However, there were three dark horses among them.

Qin Wentian, who had defeated Jiang Xiu.

Luo Huan, who had defeated Ye Zhi.

Gu Xing, a cold looking youth, who had actually defeated the 5th Night in a battle on the 6th towering platform.

And currently, the 18 that had advanced were: 11 from Chu: Emperor Star Academy – Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, Qin Wentian, Luo Huan. Godly General Martial Palace – Hou Tie, Leng Ya. Royal Academy – Shi Jun, Chu Chen. Divine Wind Academy – Jiang Feng, Kuang Dao, Kuang Sheng, and lastly, Gu Xing with an unknown background.

7 from Snowcloud: Sikong Mingyue of the Duo Prides, 2nd Sword, 3rd Sword, 3rd Night, 4th Night, 6th Night and 7th Night.

Those that had arrived along with the Crown Prince of Snowcloud were absolute elites. Because only a limited number of people had come, almost all of them had successfully advanced to the 2nd round.

After this, half of these 18 people would be further eliminated, leaving only the top nine behind. Those that managed to obtained the top nine rankings would be able to receive the rewards.

The Drunken Wonder (branch of Heaven's Wonder), recalculated the betting rates listing for the finalists, for people to bet on who among the 18 would enter into the top nine rankings.

Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue's names didn't appear within the list. This indicated that the Drunken Wonder was absolutely sure that both of them would definitely be ranked within the top nine.

Naturally, Qin Wentian's name also appeared within the listing. His payout rate was 1:4, seemingly on the high side. This indicated that Heaven's Wonder still didn't believe in Qin Wentian's ability to prevail. After all, two of the nine positions were already locked by Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, and the remaining others were all monstrous elites.

Not only that, if nothing unexpected happened, Orchon, the 2nd

Sword, 3rd Sword, 3rd Night, and the 6th-ranked prodigy Jiang Feng, should easily be able to rank within the top nine positions, leaving only two remaining slots behind.

Thus, the battle of the rest of the elites would definitely be exceedingly intense.

As for the betting rates listing for the top position, Qin Wentian's payout rate was extremely shocking-1:400. This meant that if you bet one Yuan Meteor Stone, and Qin Wentian somehow managed to obtain the top position, Heaven's Wonder would pay you 400 Yuan Meteor Stones in return.

Obviously, Heaven's Wonder had already determined that Qin Wentian's chance to obtain the number one ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet was close to nil!

TN Note:

孤星 – Gu Xing (Lonely star/ Lonestar)

AGM 123 – The Past Is Now Past, The Future Is Too Far Away

Emperor Chu District. The skies had already darkened, and atop the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat, Chu Tianjiao glanced at the darkening skies as he stated, “It’s getting late, let’s stop here for today. I believed that the competition tomorrow will be even more fascinating.”

As he spoke, Chu Tianjiao stood up. Although he wasn’t that old, he had a sense of maturity that far exceeded his age.

Those of the Royal Clan grew up surrounded by political games of schemings and intrigue. They would naturally be more mature when compared to their peers.

As the voice of Chu Tianjiao faded, the rest of the invited guests all stood up and raised their cups in honor of Chu Tianjiao, respectfully drinking a toast to him. After which, Chu Tianjiao departed, smiling in response to the farewells of the surrounding spectators.

As Qin Wentian glanced at the departing back view of Chu Tianjiao, he faintly discovered that Chu Tianjiao’s steps were always half a step behind those people around Luo Qianqiu. These minor details might not be noticed by the crowd in the spectators’ stands, but as he knew of the background of those standing around Luo Qianqiu, Qin Wentian thus made the connection.

The Nine Mystical Palace was the main character supporting the

Chu Country, Snowcloud Country and ten other countries from the shadows. Although only a few of them came to Chu, their positions and statuses were equivalent to the future emperor of Chu. Thus, Chu Tianjiao didn't dare to offend any of them.

Qin Wentian naturally understood why the Nine Mystical Palace had such great influence. A sect and yet was placed above and greater than an empire, there could only be one reason – because of strength and power.

The stronger a cultivator grew, the wider the gulf that separated the beginning realms and the next. And thus in Chu, there were several cultivators at Yuanfu and countless at Arterial Circulation but, only an extremely limited minority had successfully crossed this great threshold that was Yuanfu.

As for those that successfully surpassed Yuanfu, almost all of them had already left the Chu Country. The Chu Country was too tiny, it couldn't contain them. The majority of them would join the Nine Mystical Palace or other similar-tiered powers.

“A penny for your thoughts?” Suddenly, Mu Rou appeared beside Qin Wentian. As she saw Qin Wentian staring at the horizons ahead, she couldn't help but smile involuntarily as she asked.

“Nothing. Seem's like you are in a pretty good mood.” A warm and gentle smile broke out on Qin Wentian's face upon noticing Mu Rou.

“I still have yet to thank you. Only now did I know what an extraordinary figure Senior Gongyang was. A past champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, with extremely profound accomplishments in the realm of Divine Inscriptions. And because of your painting, Senior Gongyang had given me a promise, which had proved to be an immense help to me.” Mu Rou explained, but didn’t elaborate more on the last part of her sentence, however, Qin Wentian could easily guessed at what she meant.

“It’s just a gift for your birthday, don’t mention it. We are friends aren’t we?” Qin Wentian intentionally stated, which caused Mu Rou’s lashes to flutter, adding to her beauty. This fellow, why was he good at causing people to feel warmth in their hearts?

“What about my birthday? Would you also gift me a present?” At this moment, a mischievous-sounding voice rang out. Qin Wentian turned his head, only to see the silhouette of Mo Qingcheng appear.

The countenance of a peerless beauty adorned with a smile, it was as though a ray of the purest sunlight lit up his heart.

“What do you wish for?” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Hmm I have to consider this carefully. A present from a 3rd level Divine Inscriptionist Grandmaster, I must not waste this chance.” Mo Qingcheng was seemingly in serious contemplation, appearing extremely adorable.

From a distance, the remainder of the crowd that had yet to

disperse were all jealous of Qin Wentian. Why did this fellow had such great luck with women?

Luo Huan, Qin Yao, Mu Rou, they could all be considered top class beauties. And in addition to that, the number one beauty in Chu, Mo Qingcheng, also had such a close relationship with Qin Wentian. How could this not engender envy and jealousy in the hearts of others?

“Don’t kill me with your request.” Qin Wentian shrugged helplessly as he stared at the countenance of Mo Qingcheng.

“Relax, treat it as though you still owe me a gift first, you must not forget it okay?” Mo Qingcheng laughed as she continued, “Continue to work hard tomorrow, I’m rooting for you.”

After which, Mo Qingcheng departed with a smile on her face. Mu Rou, who was standing beside Qin Wentian, had a strange feeling in her heart as she observed the leaving back view of Mo Qingcheng. Although her looks could be considered beautiful as well, she knew that she could not be compared to Mo Qingcheng.

In the spectators’ stands, the gaze of Autumn Snow was fixated upon the youth that was standing so far away. The expression displayed on her face was extremely complicated.

Once, this youth was her fiancé, but was disdained and held in contempt by her. Yet now, beside him, there were so many peerless beauties. Even if she wanted to compare herself with them, just based on her talent and strength, the distance between

them would only grow further and further apart.

That night outside the Bai residence, the words of the youth that was filled with a resolution akin to steel had gradually become reality.

“Autumn Snow, let us depart.” Bai Qingsong whispered at the side. Autumn Snow nodded her head, as she left the place with her father.

Although many of the crowd had already departed, preparing to rest for the night, there were still several that had yet to leave, and intended to spend the night here, waiting for the commencement of the competition tomorrow.

“Boss, want to go for a stroll together?” Fan Le squinted his eyes as he continued, “Heaven’s Wonder payout rate for you – if you attain the top position – is at an astounding rate of 1:400. Do you want to bet a few Yuan Meteor Stones? Although your hope of attaining first is flimsy at best, but what if you really managed to be incredibly lucky and end up defying the heavens?”

“That high?” Qin Wentian was stunned. Heaven’s Wonder didn’t put him in their eyes at all. But considering the fact that there were monsters like Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, that was only natural. It doesn’t seem too plausible for him to attain the top position. Although to him, the reason why he participated in the Jun Lin Banquet was only to obtain the top position, but Qin Wentian also dare not say for certain that he would definitely be the one to become the champion.

“They are looking down on you.” Fatty shrugged, as though he was intentionally trying to rouse the spirit of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian glanced at Fan Le, as he spoke. “You go ahead, I still need to cultivate.”

After which, Qin Wentian bid his farewells to the surrounding crowd, as he mounted Little Rascal and departed the area. The speed of Little Rascal was so fast to the point that it transformed into a white blur of shadows and moved with the speed of a raging tornado.

Outskirts of the Royal Capital, Bamboo Lodge.

The lodge had its back against a mountain peak of the Dark Forest, and over there, there was a river. At this moment, a silhouette with a head full of white hair was sitting there, angling for fish. The sounds of the water flowing gave people a harmonious sense of peace and tranquility.

“Why do you have time to be here?” The old man stated in a low voice, he had already sense the presence of Qin Wentian approaching him from his back.

“The first day of the Jun Lin Banquet just ended, I’m here to visit Senior, to see if you are still doing well since that day we parted.”

Qin Wentian sat down beside Gongyang Hong. Quite a long period of time had already passed since their past meeting when Gongyang Hong's hair had turned white overnight. Qin Wentian would obviously be concerned, Gongyang Hong's situation back then was extremely worrisome.

“You do have the heart indeed.” A smile flickered in Gongyang Hong's eyes. The current him, had aged a lot visibly, when compared to that day when Qin Wentian saw him in the Display Hall of the Royal Academy.

“The Jun Lin Banquet is the grandest event hosted in the Chu Country. Instead of coming here you should work hard in your cultivation and strive to enter the top 9 rankings. Not only would you be able to obtain many rewards, if you somehow could become the champion, you would be able to ascend to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.” Gongyang Hong calmly stated. Although he had long stopped paying attention to events like this, he had grown up in Chu during his younger years after all and naturally knew a lot of things.

“A night worth's of time, it's the same if I cultivate over here at Senior's place as well.” Qin Wentian smiled, “I remember that previously, Senior had warned me before. If I met a girl that could moved my heart, I must seize the initiative and never miss the chance. Since Senior felt regret at the events that happened in the past, why didn't you try to make up for your mistakes?”

“Make up for my mistakes? How can that still be possible?” Gongyang Hong shook his head.

“How would you know if you had never tried? Even if compensation is impossible, would Senior be content with state things are now? This doesn’t seem to match the logic behind the warnings Senior had for me. Senior, the reason why you didn’t want me to miss my chance is that you didn’t want me to have any regrets, right?” Qin Wentian continued smiling.

Gongyang Hong gradually turned about, facing Qin Wentian. And upon seeing the bright smile akin to sunshine on the face of the youth, his heart couldn’t help but tremble slightly.

Years ago, he was also the same as Qin Wentian, an elegant and graceful youth. But now, there was no difference between him living or being dead.

Time was the cruellest existence in the world.

Qin Wentian’s gaze shifted, the radiance of his smile grew even brighter as he continued, “Is Senior thinking how good it would be if you could go back to the time of your youth? And if you could, you would never have chosen to live a life filled with regrets? But in actuality, for those that cultivate, we can maintain our youth and even reverse aging. With Senior’s cultivation base, your age couldn’t be considered old. If you lament about the regrets of ages past, would you not also regret your lack of actions today 1,000 years later?”

Qin Wentian spoke in a low voice as he gazed at that majestic mountain peak ahead. “How many people regret and lament the passing of time, and yet how many of those truly wish to repent and make up for their mistakes? If they truly wanted to repent,

why don't they make good use of the present? The past is now past, and the future is too far away. Only the present matters."

"The past is now past, and the future is too far away. Only the present matters."

The words of Qin Wentian caused huge torrential waves to rise in Gongyang Hong's heart. How could such a youngster utter such a statement that was filled with wisdom.

Silence reigned as only the sounds of the flowing water could be heard, the atmosphere was exceptionally tranquil and harmonious.

"In the end, I'm still not comparable to this youth." Gongyang Hong lamented as he stood up, before slowly walking back to the lodge. His heart was in disorder, embroiled in a vicious struggle.

The chance which he missed all those years ago, could he still make up for it?

Qin Wentian didn't follow him. The knot in Gongyang Hong's heart had to be untangled by himself. He only strongly felt that with Gongyang Hong's current cultivation, he was the envy of everyone. Why couldn't he cherish what he had, and do the things he wanted to do? Trying his best to make up for past regrets, even if he failed, he would at least have tried before.

Withdrawing several Yuan Meteor Stones from his interspatial

ring, Qin Wentian closed his eyes and started cultivating, entering into his dreamscape.

The darkness of the night gradually deepened as the constellations in the skies shone as brightly as before. Columns of Astral Light cascaded downwards, landing on the body of the youth. Some distance away, on the roof of the bamboo lodge, Gongyang Hong sat there, bathing in the starlight. As he gazed at the youth sitting by the river, a quiet smile could be seen upon his face.

The youth before him was many times more outstanding when compared to him of the past. Such a youngster, how could anyone dislike him?

“I will leave Chu after the Jun Lin Banquet is concluded. I wonder, will your name be able to shake the world?” Gongyang Hong smiled as light beamed in his heart. At this moment, It was as though he had discarded all that was burdening him, resulting in him being extremely relaxed!

AGM 124 – The Words Of Xiao Lù

Qin Wentian stayed overnight at the bamboo lodge and departed early the next morning.

Today would be the second day of the Jun Lin Banquet, and even before the skies had become completely bright, one could see countless silhouettes of people already swamping the Chu Emperor District.

Not only that, Drunken Wonder, the branch of Heaven's Wonder situated somewhere near the Chu Emperor District, was also flooded with people

In the center of the grand hall in Drunken Wonder, there was a huge, square-shaped table carved in the resemblance of a dragon. Although it looked somewhat unsophisticated, it projected a sense of wealth. After all, this was a gambling establishment.

There were 18 positions currently placed on the dragon-shaped jade table. There were also names written in front of each of the 18 positions. These names were none other than those of the 18 contestants who had advanced to the Jun Lin Banquet's second round.

Beside the names, there was a board with the betting rates of each individual written there. Odds of obtaining the top nine rankings, the top three ranking, as well as the top position, everything was indicated there clearly.

“The payout rates for Luo Qianqiu to obtain the championship is actually only 1:2. With such low odds, the recognition that Heaven’s Wonder gives him is obvious. I wonder for what reason; why would they place that much importance on Luo Qianqiu?” Many people were silently speculating, but despite the low payout rate, there were still many that bet on Luo Qianqiu, convinced that he would obtain the number one position. After all, the lower the odds, the higher the chance.

But there were also other different school of thoughts. These people speculated that Heaven’s Wonder intentionally set this betting rates to induce the majority of the crowd into betting on Luo Qianqiu. If Luo Qianqiu wasn’t the champion, the biggest winner would naturally be Heaven’s Wonder.

At this moment, two well-dressed young masters appeared next to the square dragon jade table. One of them held a wine gourd that seemed to be filled with good quality wine. Around him, even the crowd was less rowdy, indicating an invisible form of respect. This was because the status of this person was extraordinary. He was none other than the one ranked third among the ten prodigies – Immortal Drunken Wine.

“The payout rate for this fellow is abysmal.” Immortal Drunken Wine shook his head as he smiled, gazing at the Qin Wentian’s name.

On the betting board, it was clearly written that the payout rate for Qin Wentian – should he advanced and obtain one of the top nine positions – would be 1:4. Should he advanced to one of the top three positions, 1:100. And lastly, the most absurd payout of all,

should he advance and obtained the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet, the payout rate would be 1:400.

“Do you think we should bet a little?” The youth beside Immortal Drunken Wine asked.

“Bet on which? Top nine ranking, top three ranking, or him obtaining the championship?” Immortal Drunken Wine drank his wine and laughed.

The exchange of words between the two of them caused expressions of interest to appear on the spectators’ faces. There were actually people willing to bet that Qin Wentian would achieve one of the top three positions, and even the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet? Had they gone crazy?

There was still a glimmer of hope for Qin Wentian to advance and obtain one of the top nine positions. Thus, there were still several who bet on him. But as for the probability of obtaining the top three position or the championship, it would just be a waste of Yuan Meteor Stones.

“What do you think?” The youth also laughed.

“I have no idea. You should know that now I can’t even afford to drink wine. All I have left are these two measly Yuan Meteor Stones. Alright, alright, I will bet them all. Hmmm I will bet on him obtaining the championship I guess.” Immortal Drunken Wine retrieved two 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones and placed them on Qin Wentian’s name in the column indicating that Qin Wentian

would obtain the championship, amidst the laughter of the crowd.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, are you sure you don’t want to leave these two Meteor Stones for you to buy wine? They should be enough to procure enough wine to last you for several months.” Someone persuaded, trying to stop him. However, an employee of Drunken Wonder had already recorded his bet and given him a token that indicated what he bet on. If he won, he could use this token and exchange it for Yuan Meteor Stones from Heaven’s Wonder.

“Okay then, I shall bet like this. For Qin Wentian obtaining the championship, I will bet 100 2nd-layered Yuan Meteor Stones; obtaining the top three position, 100 2nd-layered Yuan Meteor Stones, and another 100 pieces of Yuan Meteor Stones for him advancing into the top nine positions.” The youth beside Immortal Drunken Wine laughed, as the crowd around them all went silent.

300 pieces of 2nd-layered Yuan Meteor Stones, all on Qin Wentian. 100 stones on each column.

“Are you not afraid of losing everything?” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed.

“Why would you think this way? As long as he advances to the 3rd round, and obtains one of the top nine rankings, I will already make a killing of 100 additional Yuan Meteor Stones based on the payout rate of 1:4. If he advances to the top three, I will win on two of my bets, my total earnings would be a total of 10,100 stones; and if he really obtained the championship, I win everything. At that moment, my earnings would be...” The youth laughed even louder,

causing the hearts of the crowd to shudder.

It looked perfect on paper, but upon careful contemplation, how could this be possible? The probability of Qin Wentian advancing to the top three was too miniscule. That was also the reason why the payout rates were that high. How could there be such an advantageous thing in this world? Most likely, out of these 300 2nd-layered Yuan Meteor Stones, more than half of them would be wasted. However, what was the status of this young man? How could he take out 300 stones that easily?

“If it goes according to your prediction, Heaven’s Wonder will really cry.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed as he spoke, while the youth beside him was already confirming the bet with one of Drunken Wonder’ employees. It seemed that the youth wasn’t joking when he really intended to bet 300 stones on Qin Wentian.

“Immortal Drunken Wine, this friend of yours is really humorous.” At this moment, a voice rang out. Immortal Drunken Wine turned his head and spotted Qiu Mo.

“Each to his own. This is my friend’s business, so there’s no need for you to worry about him.” Immortal Drunken Wine carefreely replied.

“Your friend is indeed interesting.” Qiu Mo laughed, “These 300 pieces of Yuan Meteor Stones, I’m afraid that they’ve just gone down the drain.”

Immortal Drunken Wine also laughed, not intending to continue

interacting with Qiu Mo. However, at this moment, a fatty squeezed his way through the crowd. Taking out over ten Yuan Meteor Stones, he decisively roared, “I’m betting!” as he placed a portion of his Meteor Stones on each of the three betting columns.

“Fatty, I remember you only bet 5 stones yesterday. And today, although the amount bet is slightly higher, to think that you still dared to roar this loudly despite the low number of stones you betted.” A person in the crowd laughed. Looking at the shameless expression on Fatty’s face, the crowd also laughed along.

The Fatty was naturally Fan Le. Grinning, he didn’t seemed to mind the ribbing. The most important thing to him was, naturally, earning more Yuan Meteor Stones. Hopefully, that rascal Qin Wentian would put in more effort and create a miracle for him to see.

“Fan Le, you should probably keep these few Yuan Meteor Stones for your own cultivation.” Qiu Mo sarcastically remarked.

Fatty inclined his head as he grinned at Qiu Mo. “I know you are jealous of Qin Wentian. Back in the academy, you made use of Jiang Xiu to deal with Qin Wentian, but the end result at the Jun Lin Banquet was obvious to all; Jiang Xiu lost an arm to Qin Wentian. Your credit should be the highest for this result, but to think that your skin is so thick to the point where you seemed not to have waken up from your folly despite your face being smacked. Could it be that you still want me to divulge the matter of you being secretly in love with Mo Qingcheng? Do you still remember how she couldn’t be bothered with you and took the initiative to get close to Qin Wentian?”

The expressions of the crowd became increasingly fascinated upon hearing Fan Le's words. Qiu Mo's countenance turned extremely ugly to behold as he coldly snorted. He departed immediately after placing a bet on Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.

"Let's go, the Jun Lin Banquet should be starting soon." At this moment, the people in Drunken Wonder finished their bets quickly and departed.

Chu Emperor District. People from the Royal Capital had been preparing today's banquet since the break of dawn. At this moment, the nobles and important guests started to arrive and went to their seats.

Chu Tianjiao's silhouette also appeared once again, sitting on the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat. The 18 contestants who advanced also appeared on the nine towering platforms. Since the Jun Lin Banquet would be held once every year, the contestants naturally understood the rules of the banquet.

An aged figure standing beside Chu Tianjiao spoke, "Congratulations to all of you who advanced to the second round of the Jun Lin Banquet. Although all of you already know the rules for the banquet, I, this old man, will still have to reiterate once more. On the nine platforms, each of the contestant may choose to clash against any of the other 17. Those who lose in the first clash

will become a ‘challenger’ and will be given a chance to challenge the victors. If the challenger loses again, he or she will be eliminated. But if the challenger wins, his opponent will be eliminated.

“Remember, for those who lose in the first battle, they will only be given a single chance to challenge others. If they win, they will remain on the platform but can only passively accept the challenges of others. Those that lose for a second time will be eliminated from this second round of the Jun Lin Banquet.”

“You can freely choose your opponents, but one last thing: if you win the first battle, you cannot seek out the same person you fought before for your second battle. These are the rules for the second round, and the remaining nine contestants after this will advance to the third and final round of the Jun Lin Banquet.”

The spectators went silent, but they all understood in their hearts. The second round of the Jun Lin Banquet was several times crueller when compared to the first.

The rules were set as such for the sake of fairness. If not, if contestants like Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue deliberately targeted someone, that unlucky person would surely be eliminated. That was why each contestant still had an additional chance to claim victory.

Not only that, a ‘challenger’ could not be challenged again by the contestant that challenged him or her before.

Naturally, if two powerful contestants were to join forces to deliberately suppress one person, that person could only curse his own fate for being unlucky. However, the probability of such a thing occurring was extremely low. Most of those powerful contestants would rather take a break on their own platforms than do such a thing.

Of the nine towering platforms, each one respectively held two contestants.

And the contestants standing on the ninth platform were none other than Qin Wentian and 7th Night.

At this moment, the crowd was thinking: the cultivators of Chu and Snowcloud were contending against each other in this Jun Lin Banquet. Although both countries had conflicts in the past, the cultivators of Snowcloud would not band together to suppress the cultivators from Chu, right?

After all, this place was the Chu Country.

Atop the fourth platform, Orchon shifted his sharp gaze over as he stared straight at Qin Wentian.

The hatred he had towards Qin Wentian had been boiling in his heart ever since a long time ago. Now that Qin Wentian had advanced to the second round, his chance to fight against Qin Wentian naturally arrived.

However, Qin Wentian's strength level was no longer the same as before. As evident from Jiang Xiu's defeat, his might could not be underestimated. Even Orchon had to be cautious when fighting against him.

"Qin Yao, do you want to sit over here with me?" At this moment, a voice drifted over from the seats located beside the Chu Emperor Seat. Xiao Lǔ abruptly spoke, his gaze on Qin Yao.

"No need." The countenance of Qin Yao changed slightly, becoming somewhat unsightly.

Xiao Lǔ laughed, as he continued insisting. And at this moment, on the first towering platform, Sikong Mingyue turned around, his robes fluttering in the wind. He had an exceptionally bright glow in his eyes as he regarded the figures standing on the other towering platforms.

"I had long heard of the famous name of Miss Qin's brother, Wentian. I guess it can be considered my good fortune to actually meet him in person today. I wonder if any elites from our Snowcloud Country will be willing to battle against him, thereby allowing me to admire the splendor." Sikong Mingyue's slow voice was filled with a sense of tranquility.

As the sound of his voice faded, bewilderment and puzzlement appeared on the faces of the crowd. Although the words of Sikong Mingyue sounded polite, the actual meaning hidden in them was extremely rude. Not only that, he couldn't be bothered to deal with Qin Wentian himself.

But why would he say that? Were there a hidden message in the words Xiao Lǚ spoke to Qin Yao?

Why did Sikong Mingyue want to deal with Qin Wentian?

Although he wanted to ‘deal with’ Qin Wentian, Sikong Mingyue was unwilling to take action personally. Filled with contempt towards Qin Wentian, his heart was too proud. After all, in the entire Snowcloud, only he had the qualifications to share the same namesake as Xiao Lǚ – being part of the Duo Prides.

Naturally, the relationship between Xiao Lǚ and Sikong Mingyue was also incomparably deep, akin to blood brothers!

TN Note:

Reminder: 萧律 Xiao Lǚ (Crown Prince of Snowcloud)

AGM 125 – Re-Appearance Of Sword Light

Qin Wentian's gaze abruptly shifted over in Sikong Mingyue's direction, a sharp glint of light radiating from his eyes.

According to Mo Qingcheng, the Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lù had extraordinary talent and extremely vast ambitions. Not only that, the perpetrator of the earlier incident regarding Qin Yao was most likely him.

Sikong Mingyue also locked gazes with Qin Wentian. After a single glance, he calmly turned around and sat down on the 1st towering platform, acting as though all of this had nothing to do with him.

Meanwhile, on the 7th towering platform, a silhouette abruptly stomped off the ground and soared through the air. Momentarily, the silhouette flew over the 8th platform like a great bird and continued on, before landing on the 9th platform not far off from Qin Wentian.

This person was none other than the 6th Night. He had a sturdy and muscular build, and didn't seem to be too young. But despite his build, the speed of his movements was astounding, indicating that he also had an excellent movement technique.

“Interesting, i didn't think that before Orchon made his move, the first to take action against Qin Wentian would be a cultivator from the Snowcloud Country instead. I've also heard that Xiao Lù's popularity and network in his country was particularly

overwhelming. Those elites from the Snowcloud Country should all have very good relationships with Xiao Lù.”

As many people were still speculating, 6th Night had already walked up to f Qin Wentian. He didn't say anything and only stared at Qin Wentian, akin to how a hunter stares at his prey.

Qin Wentian stared at his opponent. This person appeared rather mature, and gave off a solid and unflustered feeling. He most likely had tremendous battle experience.

Rubbing his interspatial ring, an ancient halberd appeared in Qin Wentian's palms as he spoke out, “This ancient halberd's Divine Imprint had already been destroyed by me, and it is no longer a Divine Weapon. The organizers are welcome to check.”

An aged figure flew through the air and landed by the side of Qin Wentian. After inspecting the halberd, the figure nodded his head. “This is indeed not a Divine Weapon, it has no augmentation effect. Thus, it is allowed to be used.”

“This fellow actually destroyed the imprint of a Divine Weapon. What a waste, the wealth of Divine Inscriptionists is not to be belittled.” Many people murmured in their hearts. Seeing that Qin Wentian wanted to wield a weapon, it seems that he was also feeling some pressure regarding the advancement to the 3rd round of the Jun Lin Banquet.

“Hmph.” The 6th Night coldly smiled, an aura of violence erupted forth from him as a beast-type Astral Soul was released.

An extremely gigantic demonic beast adorned with curved horns, something akin to a celestial bull, appeared. It's wild and baleful aura surged, and crackling sounds relentlessly rang out as the body of 6th Night expanded.

“Brother Bull, don't hit him too hard, okay?” 7th Night laughed gaily at the side. An earth-shattering boom echoed out as the huge steps of 6th Night rocked the ground, moving in Qin Wentian's direction.

Boom, boom, boom... The aura 6th Night was releasing got stronger and stronger. It was as though he had completely transformed into a mad bull, and was frenziedly sprinting over towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian clutched the ancient halberd tightly in his hand as he waited for an opportunity to strike. As 6th Night rushed over, Qin Wentian executed the Azure Dragon Stance with a stomp of his feet. A faint shadow of a Azure Dragon manifested as it roared before it blasted forwards, colliding with the body of 6th Night.

Rumble! The faint shadow of the Azure Dragon exploded, and 6th Night went berserk. He continued pushing forth with his palms, intending to use his bare hands to catch hold of Qin Wentian's halberd.

Qin Wentian's steps slightly shifted, executing the Garuda Movement Technique as his speed explosively increased. However, with no intention of giving up, 6th Night continued chasing, The sounds of their continued clashes rang out.

“I wonder how strong the defense of this particular beast-type Astral Soul is?”

Qin Wentian gave a cold laugh, as he stomped heavily onto the ground. As he pierced out again with the ancient halberd, the sound of a terrifying sharpness tore through the air. It was unknown how much power that strike of his contained.

Buzz! The body of 6th Night shifted sideways slightly, narrowly avoiding the strike of Qin Wentian. That clumsy looking body belied the swiftness of his movement speed. 6th Night directly used power to contest against power, smashing apart the pressure emitted by the ancient halberd. Extending out his left palm, he grabbed and locked onto the ancient halberd, as his body barreled towards Qin Wentian.

The crowd discovered that at this moment, the body of 6th Night was enveloped by a corona of demonic light, exuding a terrifying aura. With this body strike of his, even mountains would crumble upon impact.

“This is Brother Bull’s Crazy Bull’s Howl, a middle-tier earth-grade innate technique. One can only succeed in cultivating this technique by absorbing the demonic essences of mighty bull-type demonic beasts.” 7th Night laughed, as the body of 6th Night, augmented by the force of his innate technique, inched closer and closer to Qin Wentian’s body.

As the body of 6th Night neared Qin Wentian, that terrifying

pressure that felt akin to the gallop of 10,000 horses frenziedly smashed onto his body.

The Divine Energy within Qin Wentian's Stellar Meridians erupted with crazy speed. Qin Wentian's left palm abruptly blasted out, executing the Falling Mountain Palms as a manifestation of a gigantic mountain slammed downwards, onto the body of 6th Night.

In that instant of impact, it was as though currents of pressure could be visibly seen flowing about.

“Blocked?” An expression of immense shock appeared on the countenance of 7th Night. The power of 6th Night's attack was extremely clear to her; the force of this type of attack was definitely unquestionable, born from one of the most violent methods of attack. How could Qin Wentian block it with his mere cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation?

She had no idea that the Divine Energy within Qin Wentian's body was condensed and converted from Astral Energy that originated from the 5th Heavenly Layer. Also, in addition to that, the Divine Energy was converted with the aid of a 2nd-level Mountain-type Divine Imprint. How could his mountain-type innate technique, the Falling Mountain Palms, not contain terrifying power? He easily blocked the mad rush of his opponent.

ROAR! 6th Night howled in rage, as he once again sprinted madly towards Qin Wentian, intending to knock Qin Wentian off the platform.

“Let go.” Qin Wentian spoke to 6th Night. His gaze abruptly filled with a sense of imposing dominance, prepared to to subjugate 6th Night.

“Get lost.” 6th Night continued roaring in rage. Although Qin Wentian valiantly defended, he was still pushed to the boundary of the 9th platform. Many in the crowd were nervously spectating this scene.

Was Qin Wentian going to be eliminated so early in the 1st battle of the 2nd round of the Jun Lin Banquet?

“Courting death.” Qin Wentian roared in anger, causing the crowd to freeze in stupefaction. No one had thought that Qin Wentian was also capable of uttering such words.

At this moment, the Divine Energy within his body frenziedly gathered in a spiral, forming a sword-type Divine Imprint. Currently, Qin Wentian was able to form these types of 1st-level inscriptions almost instantly.

As the sword-type Divine Imprint fully finished forming, it transformed into a terrifyingly sharp sword, hidden within his Stellar Meridians. However, no one other than him had any idea about what had just happened. They only knew that 6th Night was about to succeed in blasting Qin Wentian off the platform.

Chi... Qin Wentian opened his mouth, and in that instant, he spat out a ray of incomparably sharp sword light.

“Argh...” A pitiful cry rang out as 6th Night’s movements instantly stopped. The sharp sword formed from the sword light that Qin Wentian had spat out broke apart 6th Night’s demonic qi protective barrier, and pierced right into one of his eyes. The aura and pressure that 6th Night was releasing madly leaked out as the ray of sword light dissipated. However, the damage was already done.

“Scram.” Both of them were already at the edge of the platform. At this moment, Qin Wentian grabbed hold of 6th Night’s body and directly tossed him off.

The abrupt change caused many of the spectators to feel a sense of astonishment, as they regarded Qin Wentian with a bizarre expression on their faces.

He was even able to spit out a sharp sword, this fellow, what ability did he really have? How unexpected.

Orchon’s countenance also visibly changed. He had once personally witnessed Qin Wentian spitting out a palm imprint before. But now, Qin Wentian’s proficiency with this ability seemed to have strengthened many times compared to before, having directly spat out a sharp sword and caught his opponent unaware.

Not only that, it was similar to the battle against Jiang Xiu. Qin Wentian was not a sword user, and was definitely not proficient in sword arts. Where had the sword come from?

In the spectator's stand over at the Mo Clan's sitting area, a sharp light flickered in the eyes of Mo Qingcheng's father as he intoned in a low voice. "The transmission rate of Astral Energy within this child's meridians is incredibly smooth. But, how on earth did he managed to spit out that sharp sword?"

Not only him, even those powerful Yuanfu Realm spectators in the Emperor Star Academy's sitting area, were also wondering how on earth Qin Wentian had done that.

This ability was extremely rare. It was as though no one among the elders had heard of it before. Could this be a personal technique which Qin Wentian had created based on his comprehensions? If that was the case, they would have to reassess their evaluation of Qin Wentian.

Instead of showing concern for the blinded 6th Night, those in the spectators' stand were wondering how Qin Wentian had accomplished that. It was not that the spectators were cold blooded, they were just too used to the injuries and death that were prevalent in the world of cultivators. After all, how many fallen geniuses appeared in the Jun Lin Banquet each year? Injuries and deaths were extremely common here.

However, those from Snowcloud did not think of it this way. Not only was 6th Night defeated, he was also blinded. This meant that he had lost the capabilities to fight against the other contestants. The battle between him and Qin Wentian was also his final battle.

“Bring him to the palace for treatment.” Chu Tianjiao calmly instructed, as a few silhouettes appeared. They brought 6th Night away, flying off on demonic beasts.

After the defeat of 6th Night, the crowd started re-evaluating their perception of Qin Wentian’s strength. With the ability to spit out sharp swords, and attacking with no signs of preparation, Qin Wentian was a figure that one could never engage with in close combat. If one did, not only would they have to concentrate on gaining control of the rhythm of the battle, they would have to anticipate sneak attacks from that weird ability of his. How could one be constantly vigilant especially in an intense battle? 6th Night was the perfect example.

18 contestants. After a battle, only 17 remained.

“Seems like Qin Wentian really had a high probability of advancing to the top 9 rankings.” Many people were silently speculating in their hearts. Some even regretted not betting on Qin Wentian before. After this battle, the payout rates set by Drunken Wonder would naturally be re-adjusted. If they still want to bet, they would have no choice but to follow the new payout rate.

Fan Le was especially emotional. He had bet his whole fortune on Qin Wentian. If Qin Wentian could advance to the top nine... nay, the top three, wouldn’t that be perfect?

Sikong Mingyue stared at Qin Wentian, as an extremely sharp glint of light could be seen flickering in the depths of his eyes.

“The first fight has ended, but the battle is not concluded yet. Let’s continue on.” This time round before Sikong Mingyue had a chance to speak, Qin Wentian was already slowly walking towards 7th Night with the ancient halberd in hand.

The tip of the ancient halberd produced a grinding, ear-piercing sound as Qin Wentian dragged it across the ground. The aura he was releasing continued to relentlessly rise.

At this moment, an imposing pressure emitted forth from Qin Wentian’s body. Arrogant and unruly, if the ancient halberd slashes out, who dares fight against me? This aura was so intense that it felt as though it was carved into the bones, giving people the feeling that a peerless martial god had just been born.

It was as though he was overlooking the world from an unreachable height, as he slowly ambled forward.

At this moment, 7th Night felt a fearsome, suffocating pressure advancing towards her!

TN: Gege (a term a young sibling calls her elder brother)

AGM 126 – Explosiveness Of Emperor Star Academy

Feeling the pressure Qin Wentian was emitting, 7th Night fluttered her eyelashes. With a smile aimed towards Qin Wentian, she stated, “Wentian gege, would you really bear to attack me?”

7th Night’s pitiful looking countenance was extremely moving. At this instant, Qin Wentian felt as though the person he was facing against wasn’t 7th Night.

‘Wentian gege’, only that little lass Bai Qing would refer to him this way.

After the Bai Clan relocated to the Royal Capital, Qin Wentian never saw Bai Qing ever again. Now that a year had passed, he wondered how she was.

At this instant, a wave of coldness abruptly appeared. Qin Wentian’s countenance immediately changed. This coldness was an illusion. 7th Night was endowed with the ability to create illusions. Strengthening his will, his heart became tough as stone, and his gaze became as sharp as spears. The peerless, unmatched aura once again surfaced as he stepped forth towards 7th Night.

7th Night’s soul-stirring eyes continued staring at Qin Wentian, but this time around, she felt herself sinking into the depths of a dreamscape. The dream-will that Qin Wentian’s eyes emitted was capable of luring her into a trance-like state, leaving her defenseless, sorely unable to extricate herself. Similar to 7th Night,

Qin Wentian's innate technique was also unleashed through his eyes.

Buzz. The ancient halberd slashed out as Qin Wentian leaped through the air. Descending from the sky, the pressure Qin Wentian emitted was akin to a ferocious tiger, incomparably tyrannical.

“Wentian gege, you are so ruthless.” 7th Night pitifully mumbled, but Qin Wentian proved invulnerable to her attempts to ensnare him. The ancient halberd slashed down as 7th Night finally began her counter-attack. Cold ice froze Qin Wentian's ancient halberd, and ice lances formed and shattered countless times in the air. With each shattering, the number of ice lances multiplied.

Qin Wentian continued wielding the ancient halberd in a continuous dance of motion. The howl of the azure dragon, the roar of the white tiger, accompanied by the shrill cries of the vermilion bird rang out as the ancient halberd swept out in an arc. The numerous ice lances in the air were destroyed by the force of that sweep, crumbling into nothingness as Qin Wentian's dominating attack continued towards 7th Night.

7th Night rapidly retreated, yet Qin Wentian didn't intend to give her even an inch of breathing space. 6th Night had overwhelming power. while 7th Night were proficient at control and illusion techniques. Since that was the case, he would overwhelm her with pure strength.

7th Night released her Astral Soul, as a huge icy python

manifested. Its eyes were eerily staring at Qin Wentian, emitting an extremely demonic feeling

At the same time, 7th Night's palm wavered. The icy python shrieked as it explosively dashed forwards, clashing directly against Qin Wentian's ancient halberd.

“Wentian gege.” 7th Night once again called out. Abruptly, a terrifying radiance of Astral Light enveloped her body. Two golden wings began to sprout from her back. At the same time, a storm of golden sword blades barraged towards Qin Wentian. All this happened instantaneously, and the suddenness of the explosive attack made it almost impossible for anyone to dodge.

“This should be her 2nd Astral Soul. Her first Astral Soul was that icy gigantic python, which bestowed her the power to ensnare others in illusions.” The pupils of the crowd contracted; they had all been tricked by 7th Night. Her powers of illusion actually came from her first Astral Soul, that demonic icy python.

To think her 2nd Astral Soul was actually a pair of wings. The radiance it emitted was incomparably resplendent, and it was also capable of firing feather-like sword attacks that sought to lacerate Qin Wentian's body into nothingness.

By now, the ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's right hand was already fully frozen solid by 7th Night. 7th Night's feathers were shot out at a crafty angle, aimed for Qin Wentian's right side.

Qin Wentian immediately relinquished his hold on the frozen

halberd, allowing it to fall to the ground. A palm imprint that was emanating golden light was blasted out by Qin Wentian. The thunderous sounds the palm imprint emitted were akin to a terrifying tsunami, and at the same time, staring at his opponent, Qin Wentian spat out a ray of incomparably sharp sword light.

This battle caused the spectators to be filled with wonder. How marvelous! Regardless whether it was Qin Wentian or 7th Night, their attacking methods were incredibly violent and excelled at catching their opponent unaware.

7th Night's body abruptly spiralled through the air. In that instant, the entire sky was covered by a golden radiance, as 7th Night's beautiful golden wings resembled the wings of a real phoenix. The graceful figure of 7th Night danced about as she spun rapidly in a circle while hovering in the air. Qin Wentian's sword light actually dissipated the moment it came into contact with her body.

Only now did Qin Wentian discovered how dangerous 7th Night actually was. 7th Night's golden feathers were akin to a storm of 10,000 swords, like the herald of certain death, slashing towards Qin Wentian and tearing apart the void.

"7th Night's strength isn't any weaker than that of 6th Night." Many people exclaimed, indeed, the Jun Lin Banquet's battles were all extremely fascinating.

Rumble! A terrifying, gushing sound echoed out within Qin Wentian's Stellar Meridians. The Divine Energy compacted by the 2nd level Mountain-type Divine Imprint were seething and

surging, as it flowed without hindrance and gathered within Qin Wentian's palm. Qin Wentian took several steps backwards before stomping fiercely on the ground. The intensive tremors caused by the might of that stomp shook the entire platform.

Immediately after, Qin Wentian executed the Falling Mountain Palms, and an actual mountain peak manifested before ruthlessly slamming down towards 7th Night. In the face of that falling mountain, how tiny and inconsequential the figure of 7th Night appeared.

As per what he had decided, he would use absolute strength to break 7th Night apart.

Boom! The mountain peak struck against 7th Night's rapidly revolving body. Instantly, her dance slowed, involuntarily letting out a low scream as her inner organs were all shaken from the impact.

"Get down." Qin Wentian appeared in front of 7th Night. His palms blasted 7th Night away, causing 7th Night to be flung out of the platform. Her steps stumbled as she retreated backwards upon coming into contact with the ground.

Her countenance was filled with an unnatural redness, and finally after regaining control, she spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. Although her attacks were powerful, her defense was a far cry from her attack power. How could she resist Qin Wentian's Falling Mountain Palms that was further augmented by Mountain-type Divine Energy. Also, instantly after the impact, Qin Wentian sent out another palm strike in order to move in for the kill,

resulting in her suffering from serious injuries.

Picking up the ancient halberd which he dropped earlier, Qin Wentian stood there silently. His gaze wasn't directed at 7th Night but rather at the other eight platforms. The slight wind billowed his robes, as his long hair danced about in the air. His eyes, were riveted on Sikong Mingyue as though he was making a silent announcement: You are more than welcome to test how deep my waters are.

Qin Wentian participated in the first two battles of the Jun Lin Banquet's second round.

In the first battle, he defeated the 6th Night.

In the second battle, he defeated 7th Night.

"Are you still able to participate as a challenger?" The aged figure standing beside Chu Tianjiao inquired. 7th Night opened her eyes and replied, "Give me some time. Please let the other battles to proceed first."

"Very well, I will let you rest for the duration of one battle." The aged figure nodded. Each participant had a chance to return one time as a challenger. Since 7th Night didn't want to give up despite her injuries, he would give her a chance.

Only Qin Wentian remained on the 9th platform. He sat down crossed-legged and retrieved a Yuan Meteor Stone from his robes.

Releasing his Astral Souls, Qin Wentian began cultivating by using his Astral Souls to absorb the Astral Energy within the Yuan Meteor Stone.

What he needed was the purest form of Astral Yuan Energy. Thus, for the Yuan Meteor Stone in his hands that had fallen from the 2nd Heavenly Layer, he could only extract the purest form of Astral Energy by absorbing it through his Astral Souls.

“Seems like the final Falling Mountain Palm Imprint expended a great deal of Qin Wentian’s energy.” Many people were speculating. Qin Wentian would try to recover his energy as soon as possible by making use of this period of resting time.

The capacity of a cultivator’s body was limited with regards to storing of Astral Energy. The higher one’s cultivation, the larger the capacity for storage.

Naturally, for those powerful innate techniques, they would similarly have a high level of Astral Energy expenditure. If one could defeat his opponents by using lower level innate techniques, there would be no one willing to go all out and expend all the Astral Energy stored within their body.

“The Seven Nights of my Snowcloud Country actually suffered defeat one after another.” Sikong Mingyue stated calmly. Those from Snowcloud only felt that their face had been entirely thrown away.

Currently, there was only a total of five people who hailed from

Snowcloud Country that still remained on the platforms. They were none other than Sikong Mingyue, 2nd Sword, 3rd Sword, 3rd Night and 4th Night.

These people had an extremely solemn expression on their faces as they once again shifted their gaze onto the ninth platform.

“Is the Snowcloud Country planning to gang up on my Chu Country?” Luo Huan laughed as she strolled slowly towards 4th Night. Since 7th Night had the duration of a battle to recuperate, she would help Qin Wentian.

4th Night’s gaze turned heavy as he regarded Luo Huan. During the first round of the Jun Lin Banquet, he had observed Luo Huan. The flexibility of this woman was extremely frightening.

With a long whip in her hands, Luo Huan walked towards 4th Night. Abruptly, the whip in her hands danced about, causing the skies to be covered by the whip’s shadows, akin to ten million sharp swords, lashing out towards 4th Night.

4th Night moved, as his palms wavered. A greenish light appeared out of nowhere and shrouded his body, protecting it. At the same time, he bore the brunt of the ten million whip lashes as he dashed towards Luo Huan.

“What is this defense?” The crowd had a flabbergasted expression on their face. Was it perhaps because Luo Huan’s attack were numerous but sorely lacking in power?

Luo Huan also sped towards her opponent. During the instant they exchanged blows, 4th Night's hands transformed into a sabre light that slashed out at Luo Huan. Luo Huan shifted sideways, narrowly avoiding the attack, while at the same moment, one of her hands had actually grabbed hold of 4th Night's shoulder.

Rumble! 4th Night blasted out with his fist. The fist light of his attack directly smashed towards Luo Huan's body. Luo Huan's body contorted as she bent over, avoiding the strike. Her willowy waist was like the arching of a powerful bow as she sprang forward with an explosive momentum. Her body lunged forwards through the air, coiling around 4th Night.

"Scram." A terrifying sabre Qi emanated from 4th Night's body as he released his Astral Soul.

Luo Huan's body begun to revolve about frenziedly in a spiral, spinning countless circles in an instant with a speed that was even faster than that of 7th Night. The crowd discovered that 4th Night's body seemed to have been buried by the countless whip lashes. The speed of his sabre attacks was actually slower when compared to her revolutions.

Mustang laughed lightly as he saw the scene. Luo Huan's performance was within his expectations. Truth to be told, only an extremely limited number of people knew how terrifying Luo Huan's talent truly was. Usually she would always play the fool, laughing about, making jokes. But during key critical moments, she was able to explode forth with such terrifying power.

4th Night was overwhelmed by his opponent's swift attacks. The

sabre light he was emitting eventually got weaker and weaker, to the point where it dissipated. Only then did Luo Huan stop her revolutions. Luo Huan's sexy legs were cradled around 4th Night's head, and countless wounds could be seen on 4th Night's body, his body buried under Luo Huan's merciless whip.

“Yet another dark horse.”

Several in the crowd exclaimed in shock, Luo Huan was actually capable of unleashing such power despite using a peculiar Astral Soul which many of them despise.

The combination of Drooping Willow Astral Soul and Great Vine Astral Soul, could actually be so overwhelming! This effect wasn't brought about by merely combining the power of the two Astral Souls. Naturally, Luo Huan's strength and ability were a huge contribution to be able to meld the two Astral Souls so perfectly.

“Oh my sister, why didn't you remind me earlier.” Fan Le had a bitter face below the platform. He had forgotten to bet on his Senior Sister Luo Huan!

AGM 127 – Gu Xing

Atop the platform, Luo Huan was still suppressing 4th Night. The spectators could see that she had no intentions of letting go. Despite her beautiful countenance, the spectators couldn't help but feel a trace of coldness creeping in their hearts, does she really want the life of 4th Night?

Being suppressed for such a long time, 4th Night should be suffering from asphyxiation.

“He has already been defeated, why are you not letting him go?” Sikong Mingyue cast his gaze onto Luo Huan as he icily spoke.

“I’ve not heard his admission of defeat.” Luo Huan laughed, “what happens if he attacks me after I release him?”

The cold glint of light in Sikong Mingyue's eyes intensified, but Luo Huan's actions were not against the rules. However, the extent of her suppression was such that 4th Night didn't even have a chance to speak.

It wasn't that 4th Night was weak, but the method of Luo Huan's attacks was too crafty and unexpected. The combination of her double Astral Souls actually granted her such perfect flexibility, akin to the long whip in her hands.

Even before the full might of 4th Night could be displayed, he had already entered into a hopeless situation.

“Sometimes it’s good if you know when to stop. It’s better not to go too far.” Sikong Mingyue calmly replied.

“Earlier when you guys were preparing to engage my Junior Brother Qin in continuous battles, did you think of this?” Luo Huan continued laughing. Obviously, she disdained what the cultivators of Snowcloud were planning to do, and thus had decided to seize the initiative, beginning the counterattack of the Emperor Star Academy.

Sikong Mingyue had nothing to say in response to that, as an extremely terrifying killing intent erupted forth from his body. Looking at 4th Night, he icily replied, “I will get revenge for you.”

“This sister me is not so cruel.” Luo Huan laughed, as she finally released 4th Night. Giving a swift kick, 4th Night was booted off of the platform.

As 4th Night was released, he gasped and drew in a huge breath, before promptly fainting away. Obviously, he could no longer participate as a challenger.

“These people were so ruthless, they had no intention of even allowing their defeated opponents to stand on the platform again.” Many were silently exclaiming in their hearts. Qin Wentian was thus, and so was Luo Huan.

4th Night lost his right as a challenger, but 7th Night still had a chance. However, her countenance was still bloodless and pale, the duration of the earlier battle was insufficient for her to recover

from her injuries.

“Forget it, rest well.” Sikong Mingyue instructed 7th Night.

7th Night unwillingly nodded her head, as she gave up her right to become a challenger.

At this moment, 4th Night, 6th Night, and 7th Night, were all eliminated. There were only 15 left out of the 18 contestants that had advanced to the 2nd round of the Jun Lin Banquet.

While only four contestants that hailed from Snowcloud remained.

The bitter truth of this ending wasn't something Snowcloud wanted to see. Travelling from so far away to Chu, and even co-hosting the Jun Lin Banquet with Chu, their face and pride would totally be lost if the results of the Jun Lin Banquet were as such.

“Choose your own opponents.” Sikong Mingyue calmly remarked and an instant later, the several figures still remaining on the platforms made their move.

3rd Night approached Kuang Shen.

2nd Sword approached Shi Jun.

3rd Sword had wanted to approach Qin Wentian, but abruptly,

a silhouette appeared in front of him, barring his way on the 5th platform in the midst of him making his way to Qin Wentian. This silhouette belonged to none other than the silent youth, Gu Xing.

From the beginning to now, Gu Xing had not spoken a single word. Taciturn, silent, his personality similar to his name, like the most aloof of all constellations in the skies. However, during the first round of battle, he had defeated 5th Night. Nobody would dare to look down on him.

At this moment, Gu Xing was standing in front of 3rd Sword. It was unknown if he was intentionally helping Qin Wentian, or was just merely interested in dueling with 3rd Sword.

But no matter what his intentions were, the spectators knew that this would definitely be a fascinating battle to watch.

Sikong Mingyue initially wanted to act, but soon after, he came to a stop as he surveyed the ongoing battles in three directions.

“The Snowcloud Country ran out of patience.” Many were speculating in their hearts.

2nd Sword’s released his sword intent, as a terrifying storm could be felt swirling around his body. Flicking his finger, boundless sword lights flew towards Shi Jun – ranked 8th of the 10 prodigies.

Shi Jun’s body was akin to a block of the toughest stone. He blasted out with a fist as a block of granite materialised. However,

that block of granite was instantly demolished, the impact of it actually causing him to retreat a step.

The Sword Qi gushing from 2nd Sword's body was incomparably sharp. Shi Jun had once fought against Jiang Xiu, the sword intent of Jiang Xiu was far from being able to match 2nd Sword.

If one were to say the sword intent of Jiang Xiu was comparable to autumn rain, the sword intent of 2nd Sword could only be described as that of a torrential storm.

As for 3rd Night, he struck out against ranked 9th of the 10 prodigies at the same time. 3rd Night's attacks were somewhat similar to that of 6th Night, both of them chose to focus on the cultivation of strength. With a great axe in his hand, he lunged towards Kuang Shen.

Kuang Shen was an expert in the usage of sabres. Using the tyranny of sabres, he contended against 3rd Night. And after each and every exchange, the spectators discovered that the sabre of Kuang Shen would always be slowed by half a beat, as he was forced back by his opponent's attack. This indicated that in terms of strength, he wasn't on the same level as 3rd Night.

3rd Night was using absolute strength to break apart his sabre techniques

“Although the attacks of his great axe techniques appear clumsy, they were actually incredibly profound. The sabre of Kuang Shen was sorely suppressed. Shi Jun and Kuang Shen of the 10 prodigies

will most likely suffer a defeat this time round.” The spectators were silently speculating in their hearts. This time, there will most definitely be a change in the second half of the rankings within the 10 prodigies.

Orchon, Luo Huan, Qin Wentian, and even Luo Cheng were currently already ranked within the 10 prodigies.

There would always be geniuses overtaking each other in the country. Those that were not up to par would naturally fade away over time, replaced by other stronger talents. This was reality.

As for 3rd Sword, he had also released his sword-type Astral Soul at this moment, as his sword intent begun gushing forth from his body.

Gu Xing continued standing there, with no fluctuations in his expression. However, when he stared at his opponent, a terrifying cold glint of light could be seen in his eyes.

In the midst of that cold light, one could feel waves of coldness emanating from it.

The sword lights he manifested were akin to shadows as 3rd Sword pierced forwards with his sword. This was a flawless execution of his sword-type innate technique, it was as though with the existence of his sword light, no other light would be able to share the same stage as it. The resplendent radiance all belonged to his sword alone.

Puchi~

A crisp sound rang out, causing people to freeze in shock. 3rd Sword was also similarly stunned.

His sword, had actually managed to pierce into the left arm of Gu Xing. He had originally intended for his sword to block the paths of retreat of Gu Xing, but who would have thought that Gu Xing didn't even retreat, or chose to dodge. He stood there unmoving as the sword of 3rd Sword easily pierced him.

The combat experiences of 3rd Sword could be said to be extremely abundant. But even he had never witnessed such a scene before. That was why he was dumbfounded.

While at the same time, Gu Xing grabbed hold of the sword that was pierced into his body. His eyes stared directly into 3rd Sword's, and after an instant, 3rd Sword only felt a piercing pain in his eyes. Following which, a palm strike landed on the head of 3rd Sword, as a thunderous sound rang out. 3rd Sword was flung through the air, as he let out a blood-curdling scream, before slamming heavily on the ground outside the platform. His face was already smashed into a pulp of bloody flesh.

The sudden end of the battle caused the spectators to be dumbfounded as they stared around absentmindedly.

The sword embedded in Gu Xing's left arm had already disappeared. Without the continual support of Astral Energy, the power of the Astral Soul could no longer be transformed into a

sword.

Gu Xing returned to his original position, and sat down with his legs crossed. There wasn't a lot of blood leaking out of his wound, and to everyone's surprise, his wound was actually recovering right in front of their eyes.

“What a terrifying regeneration ability. What exactly is his Astral Soul?” The hearts of the spectators trembled, and the silhouette of Gu Xing was deeply imprinted upon their minds.

His name was Gu Xing, a lonely star. Currently, his countenance had returned to that previous calm look of his, and no one knew what he was thinking.

Actually, in the first round when he had defeated 5th Night, many great powers in the Royal Capital had already begun to launch investigations into Gu Xing. However, it was as though Gu Xing didn't exist in the Chu Country at all. Despite their powerful information network, they were unable to find anything about Gu Xing's background. This person had no history attached to him, it was as though he only appeared in Chu just as the Jun Lin Banquet commenced, and defeated 5th Night.

And now, Gu Xing also defeated 3rd Sword.

Other than 3rd Sword being defeated, the two others from Snowcloud won against their opponents. Shi Jun and Kuang Shen were both defeated, but still had a chance to challenge others. As for 3rd Sword, he no longer had the capability to fight anymore.

Shi Jun and Kuang Shen contemplated who to challenge, while the other contestants sat quietly on their platforms.

Shi Jun began walking towards Chu Chen of the Royal Academy.

Meanwhile Kuang Shen was still pondering. And as he saw the little prince of Chu, Chu Chen easily defeating Shi Jun, the coldness in his heart became more intense by several degrees.

None of the remaining contestants were easy to deal with.

The capabilities of Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, the 2nd Sword, and the 3rd Night were needless to say.

Orchon, Luo Huan, and Gu Xing were similarly also extremely terrifying.

Hou Tie from the Godly General Martial Palace was also exceptionally powerful, and as for Leng Ya, he was also a ruthless character. The only two remaining contestants – other than those peak Arterial Circulation cultivators from the Godly General Palace – were the ranked 6th prodigy, Jiang Feng, as well as Qin Wentian.

Wanting to advance to the 3rd round was too difficult. Even if he won the next battle, there was a high probability that he would be eliminated in the battle after that.

Finally, gritting his teeth, Kuang Shen made his decision as he walked towards Qin Wentian. After all, he had witnessed all of Qin Wentian's earlier battles. Although Qin Wentian was powerful, he was still somewhat clear about the abilities Qin Wentian possessed. Not only that, Qin Wentian had already exhausted a great amount of his Astral Energy, and was still trying to recover. This, was the best chance to deal with him.

As Kuang Shen appeared in front of Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian opened his eyes, staring at Kuang Shen as he stood up.

“It appears that I’ve been too ‘nice’ after all.” Qin Wentian murmured. He didn’t choose to use his ancient halberd. The Astral Energy in his 7 circular pathways begun to seethe and surged. The sound of the Astral Energy gushing within Qin Wentian’s body could even be clearly heard by the spectators. At this moment, Kuang Shen’s countenance stiffened, as his gaze grew heavy.

An illusory pair of Garuda Wings flickered on the back of Qin Wentian. And the next moment, Qin Wentian disappeared from his original spot, blasting forwards with the Emptiness Imprint.

Kuang Shen raised his sabre and slashed out. The sabre lights of his broke apart the Emptiness Imprint. However, Qin Wentian’s silhouette disappeared instantly again and appeared at the side of Kuang Shen, then he sent out another palm strike.

Kuang Shen executed his movement technique to its limits as he dodged the palms of Qin Wentian. An instant later, the spectators saw the palm imprints of Qin Wentian covering the entire sky.

The sabre of Kuang Shen weaved madly as he danced about, impenetrable by even the wind and rain. But despite this, the spectators could see that Kuang Shen would inevitably be defeated if it continued on.

And as expected, after a while, the sabre weavings of Kuang Shen became increasingly chaotic. Qin Wentian sent out another palm strikes as Kuang Shen slashed out with his sabre, but at this moment, Qin Wentian spat out a ray of sword light, causing Kuang Shen's countenance to change as he hurriedly raised his sabre in defense.

Boom! A terrifying palm imprint landed on Kuang Shen's body, and the force of it catapulted his body into the air. When Kuang Shen finally slammed onto the ground outside the platform, he spat out mouthful after mouthful of fresh blood. It was as though the entire set of meridians in his body had been destroyed.

At this moment, Qin Wentian gradually lowered his legs. Did the fool think that he was only capable of spitting out sword lights?

Who said that palm techniques couldn't be executed by his feet?

At this moment, of the 18 original contestants, only 12 remained.

And once three more were eliminated, the top nine contestants would appear. The hearts of the crowd were palpitating with excitement and nervousness – especially those that had placed their bets!

AGM 128 – Sikong Mingyue

At this moment, the 12 remaining contestants on the 9 platforms were:

Snowcloud – Sikong Mingyue, 2nd Sword, 3rd Night.

Chu – Luo Qianqiu, Qin Wentian, Gu Xing, Luo Huan, Orchon, Hou Tie, Leng Ya, Chu Chen and Jiang Feng.

Following which, there would still be a need to eliminate three more participants before the 2nd round of the Jun Lin Banquet could be concluded. Currently, all the contestants remaining were extremely tough to deal with, so it wouldn't be easy to eliminate any of them.

Sikong Mingyue and Luo Qianqiu were untouchable existences.

2nd Sword and 3rd Night were the strongest opponents from Snowcloud other than Sikong Ming Yue.

As for Orchon, Heaven's Wonder had high expectations of him this year. Not only that, he had also exhibited his talent inside the Astral River Hall back in the Emperor Star Academy.

Gu Xing was a madman that has no regards for his own life; nobody dared to antagonise him.

Luo Huan had a perfect combination of her dual Astral Souls, and wasn't easy to stand up against.

As for Qin Wentian, he grew stronger and stronger after each battle he fought.

Both Hou Tie and Leng Ya were from the mysterious Godly General Martial Palace, and no one knew where their actual levels of strength lay.

Jiang Feng was the strongest Arterial Circulation Cultivator in all of the Divine Wind Academy, and was also ranked 6th among the 10 prodigies. This also meant that of the five other prodigies that joined the Jun Lin Banquet this year, he was ranked first.

Prince Chu Chen was an obscure figure in the past. However, he'd easily defeated Shi Jun of the 10 prodigies with minimal effort. No one knew what other trump cards he held.

If it was possible, the spectators didn't want to see any of the remaining 12 contestants being eliminated.

Regretfully, only nine of them would be able to advance to the 3rd round. Three of the 12 contestants were destined to be eliminated, leaving the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet.

At this moment, Sikong Mingyue slowly shifted his gaze onto Luo Huan.

Earlier, Luo Huan had totally disregarded him and wrecked 4th Night.

Now, he would let Luo Huan pay the price.

Buzz! A raging wind billowed passed. Sikong Mingyue's steps appeared gentle and light, but it was as though each of his steps contained a formless wind-type energy that caused his long hair to flutter.

Gushing forth from Sikong Mingyue's body, a terrifying surge of killing intent madly rose. It transformed into an overwhelming baleful aura, instantly sweeping over all the contestants at the 9 platforms.

Qin Wentian narrowed his eyes. Sikong Mingyue's killing intent was truly terrifying. It was as though he would decimate anything that dared to stand in his way.

And now, Sikong Mingyue was deliberately targeting Luo Huan.

"Senior Sister, if you can't defeat him, just admit defeat." Qin Wentian called out. Luo Huan nodded her head as her countenance grew heavy. The pressure that Sikong Mingyue was giving her was exceptionally great.

"Sikong Mingyue is finally making his move." The gazes of the spectators were fixated onto him. It was as though as long as he made a move, everyone's attentions would be focused on him.

“Sikong Mingyue’s strength is truly tyrannical. However, Heaven’s Wonder pegged him as the 2nd strongest contestant, a rank behind Luo Qianqiu. How much stronger the martial prowess of Luo Qianqiu would be for Heaven’s Wonder to give him such a high level of recognition.”

The spectators were silently speculating. Luo Qianqiu hadn’t even been ranked within the 10 prodigies a year ago. Now, in just the span of a single year, could he really attain the top ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet and sweep across the world?

In reality, with the efficiency of Heaven’s Wonder’s information network, they would naturally have already investigated and understood roughly the power level of each of the contestants. If not, how could they have computed the betting rates?

As for Luo Qianqiu, they were also clearly aware of his background. Not only that, they also knew of the mission Luo Qianqiu was trying to accomplish. Hence, for the Jun Lin Banquet this year, Luo Qianqiu had to obtain the championship no matter what – he had to enter the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion!

Thus, Luo Qianqiu couldn’t afford to lose.

At this moment, Qin Wentian also felt tremendous pressure. At his current level of strength, he did not have confidence to win against Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue. But despite so, he wanted to fight for it, and would do so with all his efforts. A year was too long, he wanted to fight for the present.

However, how could merely having faith and a strong belief be sufficient to guarantee victory? Qin Wentian had to think this through carefully; how would he be able to win against Sikong Mingyue and Luo Qianqiu? On this stage, the two of them would be his greatest barrier. Only by surpassing both of them would he be able to reach the peak.

Upon reaching the platform Luo Huan was standing at, Sikong Mingyue didn't slow his steps as he continued walking towards Luo Huan.

Currently, Luo Huan had already released both of her astral souls, and was awaiting for Sikong Mingyue's arrival. Although she knew she would never defeat her opponent, she still wanted to see how strong exactly Sikong Mingyue was. She decided that she would probe out Sikong Mingyue's abilities and see what his trump cards truly were.

Sikong Mingyue merely flicked his finger in the direction of Luo Huan, and an instant later, a vast, overwhelming wave of killing intent erupted forwards. The waves of killing intent solidified and transformed into the ancient form of the word 'Massacre', which flew towards Luo Huan at lightning-fast speed.

Luo Huan's countenance wavered. Her body was incomparably flexible, but Sikong Mingyue had decided to use long-range attacks to deal with her. Not only that, the power of the word imprint could not be belittled. If the imprint were to land on one's body, the body of the recipient would most likely be penetrated through.

Wielding a long whip in her hands, a storm of wind and rain was unleashed by her lashes. Each of her lashes was akin to rain falling in multi-directions, like numerous sharp swords. Her attacks clashed directly with the word imprint. Despite so, Luo Huan's attack was effortlessly broken through. The word imprint continued flying forwards with no reduction to its power.

“Kill!” Sikong Mingyue took another step forwards. He had no need to engage in close combat with Luo Huan. Flicking out another finger, numerous imprints of the ancient form of the word ‘Massacre’ manifested as they frenziedly gushed towards Luo Huan.

Luo Huan unceasingly retreated as it became exceedingly tough for her to defend. A moment later, she has already retreated to the boundary of the platform, and would soon be defeated.

“Under the pressure of Sikong Mingyue, even someone at Luo Huan's level of strength has no way to defend against it. One can clearly see the disparity in martial prowess despite the two contestants having a similar level of cultivation. Sikong Mingyue's attack contains the power of his Astral Soul within it. Not only that, he even empowers the innate technique to such an extent, integrating his killing intent perfectly together with it.”

Some of the stronger spectators were exclaiming silently in their hearts. Sikong Mingyue was too powerful, he was clearly at a different level when compared to the rest of the contestants. No wonder he was pegged by Heaven's Wonder as the 2nd strongest contestant in the Jun Lin Banquet.

As one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud, his reputation was clearly well deserved.

As he saw that Luo Huan was still not defeated, an even stronger surge of killing intent flashed past his eyes. His silhouette flickered and instantly, Sikong Mingyue disappeared as all the word imprints seemed to merge together, before blasting towards Luo Huan.

Upon seeing this, many spectators began to get nervous. An inexhaustible amount of vines abruptly appeared, as though they wanted to envelop the attack of Sikong Mingyue. However, Sikong Mingyue struck out lightly with his palms through the air, the power of the palm seemingly transformed into a formless pattern, vibrating the void.

Puchi! Luo Huan immediately vomit out a mouthful of blood, her countenance turned extremely pale. She had been struck by the baleful Qi of the word imprint. Luo Huan continued retreating, wanting to step down the platform as she called out, “I admit..... defeat.”

But even before the word ‘defeat’ had the chance to sound out, Sikong Mingyue had already struck out with both his palms in the direction of Luo Huan, causing her pale face to turn even paler.

Her Astral Souls gave her perfect flexibility, and granted her the ability to dodge opponent’s attack with ease in close combat. However, Luo Huan was extremely weak in the areas of purely attacking and defending, and currently, this terrifying long range impact attack blasting towards her seemed as if it, was as though it

wanted her life.

Luo Huan abruptly began to spiral rapidly in the air, manifesting a tornado, with her body shrouded within. The terrifying word imprint blasted onto the tornado with a deafening sound as Luo Huan's body was flung out by the impact, smashing heavily onto the ground, causing her to repeatedly spit out huge mouthfuls of fresh blood.

Her haggard countenance caused many to take pity on her.

“Senior Sister.” Qin Wentian froze at the edge of his platform, looking down at Luo Huan.

At the same time, a few silhouettes from the spectator's stand flickered as they appeared next to Luo Huan. One of them was Mustang while the other actually was Mo Qingcheng.

“I have some medicinal pills with me.” Mo Qingcheng withdrew a pill as she fed it into Luo Huan's mouth. The pill immediately dissolved upon entering her mouth, and an instant later, a wave of coolness inundated Luo Huan's entire body. That pill appeared to be extremely efficacious in healing injuries. Not only that, it was also capable of restoring one's Qi, blood and vitality.

“Will Senior Sister be alright?” Qin Wentian inquired, looking at Mustang.

“Miss Mo gave her a 2nd-grade top-tier medicinal pill, which

should be sufficient to enable Luo Huan to recover from her injuries.” Mustang cast a glance at Mo Qingcheng.

Qin Wentian visibly relaxed as he smiled at Mo Qingcheng.

“Don’t worry, that day when you were unconscious in the outskirts of Sky Harmony City, you had also ingested this pill before.” Mo Qingcheng laughed as she walked away, causing Qin Wentian to be dumbfounded for a moment, before he recovered. So that day, to save him, Mo Qingcheng had fed him such a precious pill.

“I want to retain my rights as a challenger, please give me the duration of a battle to recover.” Luo Huan gazed at the aged figure standing beside Chu Tianjiao.

“Fine.” The aged figure agreed. Luo Huan closed her eyes as she harmonized the energy flows in her body.

Qin Wentian’s gaze slowly shifted. While looking at Sikong Mingyue, his anger surged, and a cold glint of light radiated from his eyes.

“The duration of a battle?” Sikong Mingyue stared back at Qin Wentian, his eyes flickering similarly with a cold light.

However, at this moment, a silhouette appeared in front of Sikong Mingyue, blocking his line of sight to Qin Wentian.

There was actually someone that dared to take the initiative in challenging Sikong Mingyue?

This person was actually none other than Gu Xing.

A puzzled expression appeared on Qin Wentian's face. Why did it feel as though this Gu Xing wanted to help him time and time again?

"Seems like, Qin Wentian's position should already be secured." The spectators were thinking.

Currently, only three more contestants needed to be eliminated before the top 9 rankings would be known.

As per the rules, since Luo Huan wanted to return as a challenger, whoever lost would be eliminated, thus accounting for one of the names.

And if Gu Xing was defeated by Sikong Mingyue, he would naturally return as a challenger as well. And after the battle, yet another name would have to be eliminated.

If that's the case, there was only a single name remaining.

Even if Luo Qianqiu or Orchon wanted to challenge and defeat Qin Wentian, he would still have a chance to return as a challenger. The probability of him being in the final nine was extremely high.

However, at this moment, against all expectations, Qin Wentian actually took the initiative. He walked off his platform, and finally appearing in front of 3rd Night.

This battle he sought was not for himself, but for the sake of Luo Huan!

AGM 129 – The Halberd's Inclination

Sikong Mingyue's strength was obviously many times greater than Luo Huan's.

Earlier, the spectators had clearly seen that when Luo Huan had stepped down from the platform, on the verge of admitting defeat, Sikong Mingyue had continued executing a powerful attack before the word 'defeat' could be called out.

He did not want to merely defeat Luo Huan, but sought to kill her instead.

On the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, death and injury were extremely common. But if the contestants battling didn't have any deep-seated bitterness or grudges, they would stop once the line was crossed, like earlier, when Luo Huan defeated 4th Night. Even though she'd let 4th Night suffer a bit and caused him to lose his chance to be a challenger, she had still showed mercy in the end, and spared 4th Night even though she could have killed him.

During Qin Wentian's battle with 6th Night, he'd had no choice but to injure 6th Night's eyes. However, he had still showed mercy in the end.

If Sikong Mingyue wanted revenge, he could directly seek Qin Wentian out for it. If that was the case, he wouldn't be as angered as this. However, Sikong Mingyue obviously didn't wish for things to be so simple. He wanted to kill Luo Huan first before killing Qin Wentian.

If that was so, what was there to be feared about in a battle of life and death?

The tip of the ancient halberd emitted an icy, ear-piercing sound as it grinded against the ground. It was as though it was echoing the anger of its owner.

Qin Wentian stood in front of 3rd Night. And currently, on the face of the youth, there were no longer any traces of the sunny smile from before. All that remained was icy coldness.

A great axe appeared in 3rd Night's hand. Similar to 6th Night, he also possessed overwhelming strength, and was undoubtedly stronger than him. However, he wouldn't underestimate Qin Wentian.

You can have a strong sense of self-confidence and conviction that you will win. But despite this, a cultivator must not be blinded by their strength and underestimate their opponents. If not, they will surely be the ones suffering at the end.

"The attack strength of your ancient halberd is not strong enough." 3rd Night spat out, adopting a frivolous air. However, his silhouette on the platform gave off the sense that he was as steady as a heavy mountain.

Qin Wentian didn't reply as he continued forwards. At this

moment, his steps were slow and unhurried, making people feel as if he was leisurely strolling through the park.

Upon seeing this, 3rd Night slightly furrowed his brows. Seeing how serene Qin Wentian was now actually gave him a faint sense of danger. It was as though he was currently facing a sleeping, gigantic, demonic beast that could awaken at any moment.

And at this moment, the spectators saw that the eyes of Qin Wentian were tightly shut. Peace and harmony could be seen etched on his face, as though he was asleep. Despite so, his footsteps continued forwards, as though he was in a mysterious realm.

Half asleep and half awake. Currently as Qin Wentian stood there, his stance was filled with countless flaws that could be exploited but yet at the same time, his stance appeared to be perfect.

3rd Night frowned as he brandished his great axe. A hegemonic aura filled with killing intent gushed out from him and towards Qin Wentian. However, Qin Wentian's eyes were still closed, as though he couldn't be bothered at all.

“Die!” 3rd Night roared in anger as he chopped his great axe down towards Qin Wentian.

The stance which he executed this strike in was extremely profound. He wanted to see how Qin Wentian would react to this attack of his.

The instant the great axe swung down, Qin Wentian's eyes snapped open. The next moment, the Qi of Heaven and Earth fluctuated as it seemingly underwent a transformation.

3rd Night's perception was as though it was embroiled inside a dream. He was facing against an extremely overwhelming opponent that he would never be able to defeat.

Qin Wentian who was 3rd Night's opponent, seemed as if he had a power that transcended the Heavens.

Buzz! A raging wind billowed by as Qin Wentian transformed into a blur of shadows. The aura he emanated in that moment was extremely majestic, akin to countless mountains, with the intent of smashing apart 3rd Night's meagre killing intent.

At that moment, Qin Wentian was like a war god. 3rd Night didn't even have the heart to defend against his attack.

“Mountain Splitter.”

Qin Wentian himself was also fully immersed in his dream. This strike of his was like he was a real god of war.

The first stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art was the

Mountain Splitter Stance. This was currently also the only stance of it. The spectators only saw a faint shadow carrying an ancient halberd smashing towards 3rd Night with boundless might.

The Astral Light emitted by the great axe, which 3rd Night had used to test Qin Wentian, directly shattered into pieces, as though it was as thin as a piece of paper.

3rd Night struggled to lift his axe as he continued chopping out. However, the speed of the ancient halberd was too quick and too ferocious. The spectators only saw a huge flash of light, and the great axe was flung out of 3rd Night's grasp, spiraling through the air.

Puchi!

A crisp sound rang out as the ancient halberd embedded itself in the centre of 3rd Night's brows.

The tip of the halberd, as well as the crescent edge, sliced into 3rd Night's head simultaneously, stealing his life away in an instant.

3rd Night had fallen.

Qin Wentian, after suppressing him, had decimated him totally with only a single strike.

This was during the crucial moment before the top nine contestants would be born. However, at this very moment, a

genius had fallen.

Duo Prides, 3rd Sword, 7th Night, and all those contestants that participated in the Jun Lin Banquet from Snowcloud country were all stunned into silence. Without 1st Night and 2nd Night, 3rd Night could be considered one of the strongest. But, he had actually died.

In that instant, even the void seemed to freeze. The gazes of everyone landed on that dominating youth.

That attack of his was too shocking.

“So he has always been hiding his true strength.” Many spectators silently remarked.

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy allocated seats, Mustang and the rest had looks of bewilderment on their faces. Glancing about, Mustang involuntarily asked, “Does the Emperor Star Academy have this type of innate technique?”

“I don’t think so? At the very least, I’ve never seen anyone using it before.”

“Definitely not, this halberd art he executed seems to be a creation of his own.” Someone spoke, causing the hearts of the rest to slightly tremble.

The might of the halberd art that they had seen could already be

considered an earth-grade, lower tier innate technique and could be even be considered perfection at the earth-grade.

However, his cultivation base was only at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. How could he have attained the perfection stage? But that strike of his earlier... was indeed at the perfection stage! If Qin Wentian's cultivation base was higher, the might of his earlier attack might have even exceeded that of a earth-grade, low-tier innate technique.

And for those who had once seen the 3rd level Divine Inscription Painting created by Qin Wentian, they would sense that the aura of the innate technique unleashed by him, was extremely similar to that of the painting.

Could it be that the Divine Inscription Painting had a connection with his innate technique?

As Qin Wentian pulled out his ancient halberd, someone came up the platform to collect the corpse of 3rd Night.

At the same time, the battle between Gu Xing and Sikong Mingyue had also ended. The instant Gu Xing witnessed Qin Wentian killing 3rd Night, h'de voluntarily left the platform.

And since that was the case, only nine contestants remained standing on the platform out of the original 18.

Below the platforms, Gu Xing and Luo Huan stood there. Both of

them still had the right to return as a challenger.

This meant that the 2nd round of the Jun Lin Banquet would come to an end after two more battles, one by Luo Huan and another by Gu Xing.

Sikong Mingyue directed his gaze at Qin Wentian as a wave of overwhelming killing intent gushed over to Qin Wentian,

Qin Wentian continued standing there, returning his gaze. His countenance was still unperturbed as he slowly raised the ancient halberd in his hands, pointing the tip of the halberd directly at Sikong Mingyue.

His meaning was clear, even without words to articulate it.

The spectators seemed to sense two waves of killing intent colliding against each other in mid air.

The aura of Sikong Mingyue was filled with rage and killing intent, while the aura of Qin Wentian, although it looked calm and steady on the surface, had an unyielding determination to battle that could be felt.

Sikong Mingyue was one of the two top contestants that had obtained the highest recognition in the Jun Lin Banquet. By pointing his halberd straight at Sikong Mingyue, it was obvious that he intended to challenge Sikong Mingyue.

And what's even more interesting was that both of them at this moment would surely be advancing to the 3rd round of the Jun Lin Banquet. The battle between them was a foregone conclusion and would definitely occur sooner or later.

Would Qin Wentian be able to even stand before Sikong Mingyue? Sikong Mingyue was one of the Duo Prides that enjoyed a reputation at the same level as Xiao Lu. In the Jun Lin Banquet this year, he had been the strongest cultivator from Snowcloud Country.

It was as though a warm current was flowing through the bodies of the spectators. This feeling was that of hot blood rising. Even if they didn't think Qin Wentian would win, the spectators still wanted to see the ending.

It was precisely these conflicts that caused the Jun Lin Banquet to be so filled with colours, increasing the anticipation of the spectators..

“Luo Huan and Gu Xing won't challenge Qin Wentian. This means that Qin Wentian will surely be one of the nine contestants that advances. What a pity, I didn't bet on him earlier.” Someone in the crowd lamented. Before the 2nd round commenced, the payout rate for Qin Wentian obtaining the top nine ranking had been 1:4. If he had bet on Qin Wentian, he would have made a killing.

At this moment, Fan Le was laughing extremely loudly in his heart. Qin Wentian has already obtained top nine. And after this, he could only hope Qin Wentian would do his best and somehow

miraculously obtain one of the top three positions. If that was the case, he would be striking gold. He would be one of the wealthiest cultivators under the realm of Yuanfu.

Not only that, even cultivators at Yuanfu might not be able to match his wealth. Fan Le had already begun dreaming his beautiful dream.

And amidst the crowd, Immortal Drunken Wine and that young man from before were standing there as well.

That young man smiled as he stated, “I’ve already made 100 Yuan Meteor Stones, let’s go buy some wine later.”

“Since that’s the case, I won’t hold back.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed happily. Although he had never underestimated Qin Wentian, he was also surprised, as he hadn’t predicted that Qin Wentian had the power to kill 3rd Night in a single strike.

After thinking this, he involuntarily thought back to the Yuan Meteor Stones he’d casually bet. What if his bet really came through? Wouldn’t that mean he would be able to drink good wine for a very long time?

Naturally, the probability of this happening was extremely small. Because, the two Yuan Meteor Stones he had bet, were for Qin Wentian to obtain the championship!

AGM 130 – Top Nine

At this moment, only nine contestants remained on the platforms. Qin Wentian, Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, 2nd Sword, Orchon, Hou Tie, Leng Ya, Chu Chen and Jiang Feng.

And two out of these nine would have to accept the challenges of Luo Huan and Gu Xing. The victors would proceed to the next round, enjoying the glory of being the top nine contestants.

And among them, there were some that didn't participate in the battles of the 2nd round. They couldn't be bothered to make a move, and there was also no one that dared to move against them. Some examples of this were Luo Qianqiu, Orchon and Hou Tie.

In the 2nd round, these examples didn't experience even a single battle. Qin Wentian was in most of the battles that occurred. After his performance, the spectators all looked at him in a new light. Currently, Qin Wentian already had half a foot in the top nine rankings, or it would be better to say that he was already in the top nine rankings.

Many in the crowd were impressed by him. And in the Royal Capital, almost everyone already knew that this youth, Qin Wentian – who originated from Sky Harmony City – had only enrolled in the Emperor Star Academy a year ago, a full year less compared to the two years of Luo Qianqiu!

“The two of you, start choosing your opponents.” The aged figure beside Chu Tianjiao spoke.

After Luo Huan finished her recuperation, she opened her eyes and let out a charm-filled laugh. After which, she stood up and lightly nodded in the direction of Mo Qingcheng, indicating her thanks. The 2nd-grade top tier medicinal pill Mo Qingcheng gave her could be considered a miracle pill. The injuries she sustained in her battle earlier had already totally healed, allowing her to gain back her original level of strength within such a short span of time.

And as for Gu Xing, he wasn't injured at all. He voluntarily gave up the battle earlier after Qin Wentian won. From the predictions of the crowd, Gu Xing would most likely be part of the final top nine positions. Nobody dared to underestimate him despite him keeping a low profile.

Both of them walked up to the platform. Luo Huan chose the 6th ranked prodigy Jiang Feng, while Gu Xing chose Leng Ya from the Godly General Martial Palace as his opponent.

Their choices were not surprising in the least. If the spectators were to choose, they would also choose from Jiang Feng, Leng Ya, or Chu Chen. However, the little prince Chu Chen should have many hidden trump cards for unexpected situations. It was only logical for Luo Huan and Gu Xing to challenge the other two instead.

And with regards to the results of the final battle, Gu Xing defeated Leng Ya, while Luo Huan who just recovered from her injuries, also defeated Jiang Feng.

Luo Huan was even stronger than Jiang Feng, but was easily defeated by Sikong Mingyue. All of them were geniuses, yet the disparity between them was this great.

After Luo Huan defeated Jiang Feng, all the prodigies that joined the Jun Lin Banquet this year had been fully eliminated.

This scenario wasn't that surprising to behold. After all, in the cruel cultivation world, one would naturally regress if one failed to advance forward.

There were 10 members in the ranks of the 10 prodigies. The first five had already broken through to Yuanfu, while the last five were all eliminated during the Jun Lin Banquet this year.

Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, Qin Wentian, Luo Huan, Hou Tie, Chu Chen – any of them would be able to replace the positions of the fallen prodigies.

And at the same time, the top nine rankings were finally unveiled. The top nine contestants were: Sikong Mingyue, 2nd Sword, Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, Qin Wentian, Luo Huan, Hou Tie, Chu Chen and Gu Xing.

And of the remaining contestants, two were from Snowcloud Country—Sikong Mingyue and 2nd Sword. At the same time, both of them were extremely terrifying existences. Sikong Mingyue could almost certainly be ranked within the top three, and 2nd Sword had a high probability of being ranked within the top three as well.

And there were a total of seven that hailed from Chu.

The most resplendent was still the Emperor Star Academy. Because among those in the top nine, there were a total of four that originated from the Emperor Star Academy.

Luo Qianqiu, Orchon, Qin Wentian and Luo Huan!

There were no weaklings among these four.

The Emperor Star Academy truly deserved its reputation as the number one martial academy in Chu. This reputation was accumulated through the years, and because they would often produce elites and geniuses, many unpolished gems would also be extremely willing to enrol in the Emperor Star Academy.

And for Chu – other than the contestants from Emperor Star Academy – Godly General Martial Academy had Hou Tie, and the Royal Academy had Chu Chen as well. At the very least, the Royal Clan would still have some face considering that the two other martial academy ran on their support.

Not only that, there was still the youth with the mysterious background – Gu Xing.

The nine remaining contestants didn't have any hints of satisfaction on their faces. They all knew that the battles in the 3rd round would definitely be even more brutal.

These remaining nine would compete for their ultimate placing in the last round of the Jun Lin Banquet.

They may face opponents like Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, or even 2nd Sword.

And the battles at the 3rd round, be it the intensity, or the difficulty, would naturally surge immeasurably as well.

And at this moment, from behind the Chu Emperor Seat, a total of nine people walked towards the platforms.

These nine people each possessed a small case, and in the centre of those small cases, there was a jade token that was delivered to the nine remaining contestants respectively.

And so, one of the nine also appeared in front of Qin Wentian. After which, that person spoke, “Engrave your name onto it.”

Qin Wentian naturally understood the rules of the Jun Lin Banquet. He didn’t say anything as he engraved the three words, ‘Qin Wentian’, onto the jade token.

After that, the person took the jade token back as he brought the case away. And when the nine deliverers gathered, they placed each of the nine jade tokens into a case together, flipping them over, before mixing up the order.

After that, they left the platform immediately, while leaving the case with the nine tokens atop the platform.

“Who is willing to do the last honor?” Chu Tianjiao, sitting on the Chu Emperor Seat, glanced about as he smiled at the crowd

“Let me do it.” A powerful expert from the Ye Clan stood up.

“We will have to trouble Senior Liuyang to do so then.” Chu Tianjiao smiled.

Liuyang retrieved three jade tokens randomly and placed them in his hands. With a gentle push of his palms, the three jade tokens hovered in the air, and the names engraved on the tokens appeared in front of the crowd.

“Luo Qianqiu, 2nd Sword, Luo Huan.”

As the three names were shown, the spectators couldn't help but sigh in regret for Luo Huan. She was truly unlucky to be grouped with Luo Qianqiu and 2nd Sword.

The 3rd round of the Jun Lin Banquet would be a group battle. The nine contestants would be divided into three groups, and the contestants in each group would then battle with each other to determine who would be the first, second and third.

After which, those that obtained the first position of each group would proceed to the strongest stage, and fight for the top three

positions.

For those that attained the 2nd position of each group, they would proceed and fight for the 4th to 6th positions.

And for those that obtained the last position of each group, they would then fight for the 7th to 9th positions.

Luo Huan would need to contend with Luo Qianqiu and 2nd Sword to determine her ranking. She was truly unlucky as she had a high probability to be ranked last in this group.

Ye Liuyang withdrew another three jade tokens and caused them to hover in the air again. This time round, the spectators had a strange expression on their faces and they couldn't help but cast a glance at Qin Wentian.

Earlier, Qin Wentian pointed his ancient halberd straight at Sikong Mingyue. His intent to battle was overwhelming.

And now, they would finally have the chance to battle. The 2nd group consisted of Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian and Chu Chen.

Since the names of the first two groups had been unveiled, the spectators were already able to guess who the last group consisted of. But despite this, Ye Liuyang still did the same procedure, allowing the jade tokens to hover in the air. The last group consisted of the remaining three contestants – Orchon, Gu Xing and Hou Tie.

The groupings of the 3rd round cause the spectators to be filled with intense anticipation. Regardless of which grouping it was, they were sufficient to cause the crowd to feel that their blood was boiling with excitement.

Luo Qianqiu, 2nd Sword, Luo Huan.

Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian, Chu Chen.

Orchon, Gu Xing, Hou Tie.

As Qin Wentian stood on the platform, he sensed a malevolent glance filled with sharpness locking onto him. Shifting his gaze over, he discovered Sikong Mingyue walking towards him. Even before the battle started, killing intent could already be felt in the air.

At this moment, in the Emperor Chu District, on the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat, Chu Tianjiao stood up as he smiled, “Let me begin by announcing the rules of the final round of this year’s Jun Lin Banquet. All the contestants will battle within their groups to determine who will be the number one, number two and number three”

“For the three number ones, they will contend for the top three rankings of the Jun Lin Banquet.”

“For the three number twos, they will contend for the 4th to 6th

rank.

“And for the three number threes, the 7th to 9th rank.”

“Other than that, the one ranked 7th will have a single chance to challenge those in the 4th to 6th rank. The one ranked 4th will similarly have a chance to challenge those in the top three rankings.”

Chu Tianjiao explained, as he confirmed the rules of the final round.

“Okay, this will be all for today. We will continue the final round of the Jun Lin Banquet tomorrow.” Chu Tianjiao announced, causing many of the spectators to have dissatisfied and unhappy expressions on their faces.

What was he doing, the groupings of the last round has already been determined, but they must still wait one more day to see the final battles? This feeling was too unbearable.

“Go, let’s go to Drunken Wonder to take a look. Now that the groupings are determined, the payout rates may change as well, this is a chance!”

“Right, my chance is here. This means that there will be new payout rates calculated for each of the segments, I’m going to try my luck.”

And thus, many in the crowd headed towards Drunken Wonder, preparing their bets. And within them, the majority had already made a killing from their earlier bets on who would obtain the top nine rankings. How could they not seize the chance to make another killing this time round!

AGM 131 – The Silhouette That Lighted Up The Starry Skies

Qin Wentian continued standing on the platform, with no intention to leave. And on the platform directly opposite of him, stood Sikong Mingyue, gazing directly at him.

Sikong Mingyue didn't say anything, but that killing intent he emanated could clearly be felt. His intention was evident even without saying.

“Where are Qin Zhi and Qin Shang?” Qin Wentian asked as he stared at Sikong Mingyue. Since Sikong Mingyue deliberately targeted him after a single sentence from Xiao Lù, the relationship between them should be extremely close. And if that was the case, Sikong Mingyue should also know about Qin Zhi and Qin Shang.

“Qin Zhi, Qin Shang.” Sikong Mingyue exhibited an expression of contemplation before continuing, “After they heard about their father being besieged, they most likely already rushed off to the front lines. No matter what, they are still the relatives of one of the candidates to be the Crown Prince's wife. The Snowcloud Country wouldn't make things difficult for these minor characters.”

Sikong Mingyue couldn't even be bothered about Qin Shang and Qin Zhi. To him – and to Snowcloud – these two had no value at all.

“Allow me to correct you. My sister Qin Yao has no relations with the crown prince of Snowcloud. Not only that, she will also not be returning there.” Qin Wentian retorted sharply, challenging

Sikong Mingyue directly.

“Everyone in Snowcloud already knows that she’s one of the candidates to be selected for the Crown Prince’s wife. Since this is the case, no matter where she is, she has to return to Snowcloud. If not, where would the face of Snowcloud be?”

Sikong Mingyue turned around after speaking and walked away, his back facing Qin Wentian.

“You should worry about yourself. For the battle tomorrow, if Qin Yao apologises to the Crown Prince, I may still show mercy.” Sikong Mingyue remarked with his back facing Qin Wentian. The matter of apology he was referring to was obviously Qin Yao’s stay in Chu – her unwillingness to return to Snowcloud.

“Truly arrogant.” Qin Wentian gazed at the departing back of Sikong Mingyue. Back then, Xiao Lǜ may have made use of Qin Yao to make some unknown deals with Chu Tianjiao. Now he still had the gall to turn the situation around, blaming Qin Yao for not returning to Snowcloud?

The reason was only because if Qin Yao stayed in Chu, Xiao Lǜ would have no face. After all, Qin Yao was unable to provide a satisfactory reason.

However, if back then Chu Tianjiao succeeded and Qin Yao became a sacrifice, Snowcloud would probably react differently.

“This opponent is truly hard to deal with. If you can’t, just give up, don’t contend for the top three positions.” Luo Huan intoned in a low voice. She fought against Sikong Mingyue before and was extremely clear on how hegemonic his attacks could be.

“Don’t contend?” Qin Wentian gazed at the horizons. He was already standing on the grandest stage of Chu, how could he give up so easily?

Inclining his head, staring at the spectators’ stand, Qin Wentian could make out many familiar faces in the crowd.

Mo Qingcheng was sitting in the Mo Clan’s seating area, and had a radiant smile displayed on her face. Clenching her dainty fist, she pumped it in the air, indicating that she was rooting for Qin Wentian.

And in the seating area that the Divine Weapon Pavilion was allocated, An Liuyan, Yang Chen and Francis was also there, indicating their support by nodding their heads.

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy’s seats, Mustang had a face full of smiles. Not only that, Qin Wentian also noticed a silhouette wearing a conical bamboo hat sitting behind Mustang. He knew that this person was none other than Ren Qianxing.

The gazes of those looking at him were all filled with anticipation, waiting for him to display his radiance in the last round of the Jun Lin Banquet.

Although Luo Qianqiu was also a student from the Emperor Star Academy, he wasn't the representative of it. In fact, the Emperor Star Academy was trying to bar his path. The true representative of Emperor Star Academy was Qin Wentian, while Luo Qianqiu represented the Nine Mystical Palace.

Orchon was also a student of the Emperor Star Academy, but because of his noble birth, it could be said that in comparison to the Emperor Star Academy, he represented the Ou Clan more.

Only Luo Huan and Qin Wentian could be considered the 'pure' representatives from the academy, and thus the Emperor Star Academy was hoping to witness their brilliant performances.

Seeing that the spectators from the Emperor Star Academy has yet to depart, Qin Wentian strode forwards, moving towards them.

"What's wrong?" Mustang smiled as he saw Qin Wentian approaching.

"Teacher, I wish to go to the Astral River Hall, however I do not have sufficient authority to enter." Qin Wentian explained.

"I'll bring you there." Behind Mustang, Ren Qianxing who was wearing the conical bamboo hat interjected, directly opening up a backdoor for Qin Wentian.

"Thank you." Qin Wentian nodded and smiled as he departed together with Ren Qianxing, returning to the Emperor Star

Academy.

Today, the gambling establishment that was Heaven's Wonder went totally crazy. Every branch of Heaven's Wonder, especially Drunken Wonder, was swamped by crowds of people, so packed that no one could even enter.

The groupings of the 3rd round were already determined. The payout rates for the nine battles were also already computed.

The first group consisted of Luo Qianqiu, 2nd Sword and Luo Huan. The one that obtained the most recognition was undoubtedly Luo Qianqiu, followed by 2nd Sword, and then Luo Huan.

In the second group were Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian and Chu Chen. The one that obtained the most recognition, was naturally Sikong Mingyue, while Qin Wentian and Chu Chen both had the same odds. This meant that for the battle between Qin Wentian and Chu Chen, regardless of who it was that won, the payout rate would remain at 1:2. If that was the case, it was all up to the individual judgement of the gamblers.

As for the last group, it was Orchon, Gu Xing and Hou Tie. The one that obtained the most recognition was Orchon, followed by Gu Xing, and lastly Hou Tie.

And comparing the three groups, the three contestants that obtained the highest level of recognition were Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue and Orchon respectively. Hence, the payout rates for

these three contestants, should they obtain the top three positions, was also the lowest.

The payout rate of Qin Wentian obtaining the top ranking remained unchanged. It was still at 1:400.

But there was some adjustments to the payout rate should he obtain a position in the top three. Currently, it was lowered to 1:80, which also meant that there were some gamblers that started to trust Qin Wentian.

It was too difficult if Qin Wentian wanted to slaughter his way into the top three positions. Firstly, he had to defeat Sikong Mingyue. Either that or he had to obtain the 4th or the 7th position before slowly slaughtering his way up the ranks.

However, the difficulty of this was tremendously high, almost impossible.

.....

The grounds of Emperor Star Academy still seemed as empty as before. The students of the academy had a greater interest in the Jun Lin Banquet than the other academies. The reason being that the contestants of the Jun Lin Banquet originated from the Emperor Star Academy frequently.

All of them hoped that one day, it would be they themselves standing there on the stage, their name resounding famously

throughout Chu!

5th Level of the Astral River Hall.

Qin Wentian sat there cross-leggedly. This time round, he didn't opt to linger, but instead he broke through the restrictions of the earlier levels and arrived at the 5th level in one breath.

Inclining his head, he looked up at the gorgeous starlit skies.

Revolutions of runic lines interweaved together, transforming into a terrifying fist light, as the light filled the skies with a multitude of fist shadows, blasting directly at his consciousness.

Boom!

The will of Qin Wentian relentlessly endured the shockwaves' vibrations, as booming sounds echoed out relentlessly in his mind. Despite this, he still remained as steady as a boulder.

And despite being on the 5th level, he was still able to clearly see the intricate patterns of the runic lines interweaving. Were it other cultivators, they may not even be able to sense the intricacies of the 5th level, and would merely endure the pressure blindly. This was one of the abilities bestowed upon him as a result of his high level of sensory abilities and immense affinity.

And after he endured the astral pressure for an extended period of time, Qin Wentian gradually began to get used to the depth and

intensity of this type of pressure-attack. Slowly, after his body acclimated to the pressure, Qin Wentian didn't rushed to break apart the restriction on the 5th level. Previously, the instant he set foot on the 6th level, he had sensed how tyrannical and terrifying the astral pressure was.

The skies had already darkened, and within the Astral River Hall, the 5th level shone brightly like a beacon. However, other than the old guardian, no one else was near the Astral River Hall. Thus no one noticed the radiance of the second starlit sky.

The darkness of the night deepened.

The academy was as though it was filled with traces of loneliness. At this moment, a returning female student laid flat on the ground, smiling lightly as she admired the beautiful starry sky.

She heard that there were four students from the academy participating in the Jun Lin Banquet. How dazzling they were, when would it be her turn to shine as brightly as them?

And in this very instant, a ray of resplendent, blinding light erupted forth, causing the female student to be flabbergasted. On the dome of Heaven, it was as though a second piece of starlit sky had appeared, brightening up the darkness of the Emperor Star Academy.

The female student abruptly stood up and cast her gaze over to the distance, only to see that in a certain direction, a bright glow exploded forwards. It was so dazzling that it could be compared to

the constellations shining in the sky.

“It’s the Astral River Hall. The flash of radiance that day shone once again.”

The female student started trembling as she jogged in the direction of the Astral River Hall. After arriving there, her heart shuddered intensely as she saw that the 6th level was the source of the light.

The 6th level, someone actually stepped onto the 6th level?! Which of the illustrious seniors or elders from the Emperor Star Academy was it?

She had heard of the legends before. For one to step into the 6th level, this meant that they had a chance of forming innate links with constellations of the 6th Heavenly Layer and condensing an Astral Soul from there. Normally, even for those sovereigns at the Heavenly Dipper Level, they would only be able to condense an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer. How strong would one’s sensory abilities and affinity need to be for them to condense an Astral Soul from the 6th Heavenly Layer?

Not only that, a monstrous sensory ability would at most allow you to sense the Astral River of the 6th Heavenly Layer, but the astral pressure there was totally sufficient to collapse a person’s will and consciousness.

The brilliance of the night sky over the Emperor Star Academy lasted for quite some time. And those students that still remained

in the academy were wildly conjecturing – which powerful senior was it that possessed such a monstrous affinity? Weren't his sensory abilities a little too terrifying?

As the darkness of the night increasingly deepened, the resplendent radiance still stayed the same. The female student sat at a remote corner far away from the Astral River Hall with her eyes lightly shut, as though she was currently taking a nap.

And at this moment, waves of a gentle commotion drifted over as the female student opened her eyes. After which, she saw the silhouette of a youth walking out from within the Astral River Hall. As her gaze shifted over, it was as though the youth had sensed it, as he too shifted his gaze in her direction, before turning and departing from the area.

The heart of the female student thumped wildly as she involuntarily let out a gasp. Hurriedly covering her mouth with her hands, an expression of immense shock and awe was displayed on her face.

Who had she seen?

That was Qin Wentian!

Inclining her head, the 2nd piece of starlit skies disappeared and the Astral River Hall no longer emitted light. However, the heart of the female student was unable to calm down even after a long time.

AGM 132 – Damn Old Fogey?

After returning to his residence, Qin Wentian began cultivating. However at this moment, his condition wasn't too good.

In his dream, Qin Wentian sat underneath a starlit sky, and above him, numerous revolutions of runic lines frenziedly interweaved intricately as they transformed into countless fist shadows that filled the skies. As the fist shadows blasted downwards, Qin Wentian calmly sat there. He knew that they were incapable of injuring him because this was inside his dreamscape.

Currently, Qin Wentian was trying to recreate and emulate the scenario from the 1st level of the Astral River Hall to the 5th level. On the 5th level, he sensed the beautiful runic lines metamorphosing into a spiral black hole before they transformed into terrifying fist lights, pounding downwards. However, when he stepped onto the 6th level, the fist lights he felt were no longer fist lights, but were instead heavenly fist shadows powered by the might of the constellations wanting to decimate both the Heavens and Earth,

Each fist shadow was like a constellation, the magnificent view of tens of millions of constellations smashing downwards, causing fear even in the hearts of intrepid heroes. Especially in that instant when the pressure blasted against his consciousness; the tens of millions of constellations amalgamated together, becoming a single entity, transforming into a stream of light as his body violently shuddered from the impact.

“How gorgeous.” Qin Wentian inclined his head as he gazed at

the starlit skies in his dreams, immersing himself within.

After several moments, the Astral Energy in Qin Wentian's body started surging, as a Heavenly Hammer coalesced from Astral Light appeared in his hands. Abruptly, Qin Wentian swung the hammer downwards, slamming it onto the ground, creating a Divine Imprint that resembled the starlit skies from before. Within the imprint, countless miniature superimposed constellations could be seen revolving about slowly in circular motion.

“If I inscribe this Divine Imprint onto a weapon, the augmentation effects would be so great that it's unimaginable. Maybe I can even create a top-tier, 3rd-grade Divine Weapon.” Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath and felt excitement in his heart. After which, he created a pencil and paper, and started to inscribe the imprint underneath the starry skies.

After a long period of time, he attempted the inscription process many times, and finally, Qin Wentian succeeded in inscribing the 2nd Divine Imprint of his very own creation.

Just as before, a silhouette wielded the ancient halberd with a single hand. This strike was as heavy as a mountain, and at the instant when the ancient halberd pierced out, a terrifying spiral appeared. At the tip of the halberd, numerous constellations could be seen revolving in beautiful arcs as they blasted forwards with the terrifying spiral, giving people a sensation that it was capable of devouring anything.

“This will be the second stance of my Great Dream Halberd Art, the Fallen Star Stance.” Qin Wentian murmured in a low voice.

Now, there were already two stances of the Great Dream Halbard art that he created. The first stance was Mountain Splitter, while the second was Fallen Star.

The requirement was that he had to gather and condense sufficient amounts of Astral Energy before it could be used. However, to Qin Wentian who was able to condense Divine Energy, this wasn't a problem at all.

Standing up, Qin Wentian began to practice the second stance Fallen Star inside his dreamscape. It was one thing using his imagination to inscribe the Divine Imprint, but if he wanted to use it in real combat, the requirements would naturally be higher by several times and would certainly not be so easy.

The insight of Fallen Star's creation was naturally comprehended from the Astral River Hall. However, it was impossible to emulate the power levels of the terrifying spiral black hole from the 5th and 6th level in the Astral River Hall. At most, the power of the attacks he executed would be on par with the astral pressure of the 3rd level. Despite this, it was already sufficient to elevate his attacking prowess by several times. This second created stance of his would be his strongest attack since the creation of Mountain Splitter. Its power was undoubtedly countless times mightier when compared to Mountain Splitter.

Qin Wentian frenziedly cultivated while lamenting that time was not enough. Even though Little Rascal's speed was incredibly fast, it would still need some time to reach the Chu Emperor District. This was also the reason why there was almost no one left in the

Emperor Star Academy, as the distance to there was too great. For those that has no demonic beasts as mounts, they would waste too much time travelling back and forth.

And in the end, Qin Wentian had not completely mastered Fallen Star. He hurriedly absorbed Astral Energy from his Yuan Meteor Stones to replenish the energy in his body, while silently lamenting that time passed too fast.

As the Astral Energy within his body recovered to the optimal level, Qin Wentian's will drifted to within his sea of consciousness. Over there, he saw the tiny Astral Being once again.

This was the inheritance left to him by the damn old fogey his father, transformed from a stone that used to hang around his neck. Before, he had witnessed many incredible things from the memory fragments of the tiny Astral Being, even obtaining heaven-defying techniques such as the Spirit Refinement Method. Although it wasn't some godly innate techniques, Qin Wentian didn't dare to put a price on the worth of the Spirit Refinement Method. He knew that if, somehow, the Spirit Refinement Method was leaked, it would cause the entire Chu Country to be topsy-turvy.

"The 3rd round of the Jun Lin Banquet is imminent, I wonder which memory fragment would I obtain this time round. Let's hope I'm lucky." Qin Wentian murmured in his heart. After feeling the killing intent and power level of Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian felt tremendous pressure. His level of strength still wasn't sufficient for him to obtain the championship, especially with the fact that his Fallen Star Stance has yet to be fully mastered. That

was why he hoped to be lucky enough to obtain some memory fragments that may be of use to him.

As his will drifted into the Astral Being, Qin Wentian once again felt as though he just stepped inside a boundless Astral River with many pieces of astral memory fragments located within.

Qin Wentian's will drifted about, and the Yuan Meteor Stones clutched in his hands transformed into a terrifying light stream, frenziedly gushing towards the tiny Astral Being as his will came into contact with the memory fragments. He didn't hesitate to exhaust large amounts of Yuan Meteor Stones, as he wanted to try to see if he could find a method to heighten his combat prowess.

Fragment after fragment was absorbed into Qin Wentian's consciousness, Qin Wentian lit up a total of 10 astral memory fragments before his consciousness was finally expelled from that of the tiny Astral Being. Opening his eyes, he felt his heart strings being slightly wrenched as he glanced at the empty husks of Yuan Meteor Stones littered on the ground.

Such an astronomical price. If it were not for the Divine Weapon Pavilion giving him an almost inexhaustible amount of Astral Stones to support him in his cultivation, it would be impossible for him to even light up one astral memory fragment.

Qin Wentian didn't have time to continue feeling heartache over these expended husks of Yuan Meteor Stones. He directly shut his eyes as he digested the memories, hoping to find something of use to him.

In the first fragment, his heart involuntarily trembled as he observed the memory stored in it.

He saw numerous peerless experts engaging in an all-out war, standing in between Heaven and Earth. These peerless experts were all fearsome existences that he would never have the chance to interact with.

However, the reason for the trembling of his heart was because he saw... a certain someone.

Uncle Black!

In the scenes that flashed by, Uncle Black wasn't crippled, his body was whole and healthy. As his black hair draped across his shoulders, he emitted a demonic charm so good-looking that Qin Wentian almost failed to recognised him.

And beside Uncle Black, there was a middle-aged figure. Qin Wentian had seen this person before, he was none other than the godly existence Qin Wentian witnessed in the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect. The middle-aged figure had his hands crossed behind his back, while Uncle Black stood beside him, as though he was his subordinate.

This scene was extremely short-lived. As Qin Wentian's consciousness retreated out of the memory fragment, his eyes reddened and his fists were tightly clenched, as though he was in anguish.

Looking at the high-spiritedness of Uncle Black back then, it was extremely hard for him to match it with the ‘crippled’ old man who brought him up. Who was it that crippled Uncle Black? What sort of battle did he experience?

And who on earth was that middle-aged figure? Why did he appear every single time?

Drawing in a deep breath, Qin Wentian continued digesting the memories. Following which, he witnessed many scenes. However, he discovered a common point across all the memories – the middle-aged figure was in every one of them.

Qin Wentian made a bold hypothesis, could it be that the memory fragments of the tiny Astral Being originated from this middle-aged man?

If that was the case, wasn’t his memory all already shattered and transformed into the countless fragments?

And who exactly was he? Could he be the damn old fogey?

As he thought of this, a huge wave arose in Qin Wentian’s heart. According to Uncle Black, that mystical stone from before was the only thing the damn old fogey left behind for him. If what he guessed was right, if the astral memory fragments contained within the tiny Astral Being were the memories of the middle-aged man, there was a high probability that he was his birth father!

If that really was the case, it made sense why Uncle Black was always protecting him from the shadows. Uncle Black should either be the subordinate or an extremely close friend of the middle-aged man – as evident from the fact that even after Uncle Black was crippled, he still spared no efforts in taking care of Qin Wentian, nurturing him and watching him grow up.

At this moment, Qin Wentian had already forgotten his original intentions. Immersing himself in the memories, trying to find clues of his own background, he devoured the memory fragments rapidly one after another, with one last piece of memory fragment remaining.

His last memory was of a youth standing next to many towering structures. An expression of extreme stubbornness could be seen on his face, not matching the majestic aura of his surroundings. As he sat down cross-leggedly, more stubbornness flickered in the depths of his eyes, as astral light circulated around his index finger. All of a sudden, the youth stabbed his finger straight into his own body, while at the same time reciting an oracular chant. The sound of the chant, somehow, drifted into Qin Wentian's mind.

Instantly, the entire body of the youth turned red. Within his body, inside his blood, the fetters of bloodline appeared as they flickered in and out of existence. As his finger pierced into his body, and after the oracular chant took effect, the layers of fetters unceasingly broke apart while the figure of the youth was covered in blood as he let out several blood-curdling screams, his body trembling as though he was in great agony.

Even after his consciousness exited the memory fragment, Qin

Wentian's heart shuddered intensely.

So, the 12 connecting styles of life needle technique originated from there.

And not only that, that needle technique seemed to have been specifically created for that very purpose.

In his memories, the finger technique of the youth were exactly the same as the needle technique Uncle Black taught him. However, the finger technique of that youth seemed to be able to permanently release the seal of the fetters that bound his bloodline limit, while the 12 connecting styles of life needle technique was only able to temporarily release the seal.

“Uncle Black must have feared that my body wouldn't be able to take the backlash and thus created a weaker version of the finger technique.”

Qin Wentian sighed, even the bloodline limit of that middle-aged man was the same as him. It seemed like his conjecture was correct. That youth in the last memory should have been the middle-aged man when he was younger.

“There shouldn't be any mistakes. That damn old fogey left all his memories to me. If that's the case, could it be that he is already dead?” Qin Wentian sighed again as he stared at the starry skies.

The deeds that his old man dared to do in his youth, why would

he not dare too?

He, Qin Wentian, wasn't an abandoned orphan. Not only that, his father was someone incredibly remarkable.

Since that was the case, he shouldn't let the damn old fogey be disappointed.

As he thought of this, Qin Wentian shut his eyes as his finger glowed with Astral Light. Abruptly, using the essence and methods of the 12 connecting styles of life needle technique, he too stabbed his finger into his body. An instant later, the unsealing technique circulated.

His blood started to seethe with ever increasing fury!

AGM 133 – A Missing Contestant?

The skies gradually brightened. Today was the final round of battle for the contestants in the Jun Lin Banquet.

Today, the top nine contestants has already been grouped into threes and would determine their final individual ranking by battling with each other.

And today, the masses that swamped the Chu Emperor District also created history, there were even more people compared to the previous two days.

As for the inns and towering buildings near by, they were all already fully packed. Some of the crowd stood in front of the windows or at the highest points of the towering buildings, casting their gazes onto the grand stage of the Jun Lin Banquet.

Everyone was filled with anticipation regarding the clashes today. How fascinating would it be?

The grand feast was already prepared as valuable guests arrived shortly after. Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lǜ were already there. Looking at the countless waves of people, Chu Tianjiao had a face filled with smiles. The Jun Lin Banquet hadn't been this magnificent for many years, it seemed like the contestants this year were all really popular.

And in the spectators' stand, in the area allocated to the Star River Association, the vice president of the Star River Association,

Zuo Yin had also personally arrived. And beside him was Murin and a few other people who held important positions in the Star River Association.

“Murin, the thing I assigned to you earlier, you botched it totally didn’t you.” Zuo Yin spoke to Murin, causing his countenance to turn somewhat unsightly.

Zuo Yin was naturally referring to the Divine Inscription painting of Qin Wentian’s back then. Zuo Yin had instructed Murin to obtain the painting at any costs and to invite the inscriptionist back to the Star River Association.

“Vice President Zuo, there were some mishaps but I’ve really tried my best.” Murin replied in a low voice.

“Oh?” Zuo Yin calmly continued, “But why did I hear that the painting was created by Qin Wentian? Not only that, when you were in the Sky Harmony City, you had the chance to recruit him into the Star River Association, but instead you pissed him off for no reason, which eventually paved the way for him to join the Divine Weapon Pavilion instead. Is this matter true?”

“It is. Back then I tried to persuade him, however this person was too arrogant and looked down on our Star River Association, which was why I decided to hand him over to the Ye Clan to deal with. As for the things that happened later, I could not have predicted them.” Murin’s countenance was exceedingly ugly to behold, to think that the vice president had even investigated this matter.

“Hmph.” Zuo Yin was extremely unhappy as he coldly snorted. Now Qin Wentian was so famous, how could he not know about the earlier incidents?

If that day, Murin had successfully inducted Qin Wentian into the Star River Association, with his talent, it wasn't impossible for him to be nurtured to become the future vice president of the Star River Association.

“I wonder what his final ranking will be when the Jun Lin Banquet has concluded.” Zuo Yin silently remarked in his heart.

It wasn't only him. At this moment, everyone was filled with anticipation with regards to what the final ranking of the Jun Lin Banquet would be like.

In the area allocated to the Mo Clan, Mo Qingcheng's father sat, and was talking to her who was sitting by his side, “Qingcheng, what do you think the final ranking position of the little fellow will be?”

“I have no idea, maybe one of the top three?” Mo Qingcheng smiled.

“Wow, you believe in him so much?” Mo Qingcheng's father exclaimed. After all, it was incredibly difficult to get into the top three.

He naturally knew of the background of Luo Qianqiu. Not only that, but Sikong Mingyue was someone who had also obtained recognition from the Nine Mystical Palace, and was extremely powerful. It was going to be beyond difficult if Qin Wentian wanted to surpass them.

And as for the last slot in the top three rankings, there was Orchon, 2nd Sword, Chu Chen and Hou Tie. How could it be so easy to obtain one of top three rankings?

“No matter what his final ranking is, his achievements in the Jun Lin Banquet this time round are already sufficient for him to feel pride. It’s extremely rare to see someone like him be able to win in combat despite fighting against people with a higher cultivation base. After all, he’s only at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, but the amount of Astral Energy contained within his body and the power of it seem to be many times more terrifying compared to others. The reason should be because his Astral Souls were condensed from a higher Heavenly Layer when compared to the others’.”

Father Mo mumbled in a low voice. Other than this, the terrifying aspects about Qin Wentian were his proficiency with his innate techniques, as well as his repertoire of strange attacks – spitting out swordlight or unleashing palm strikes with his feet, the degree of control he exhibited wasn’t something anyone could do. He was filled with immense curiosity towards Qin Wentian.

Beside the dragon seat of the Chu Emperor District stood Luo Qianqiu. Beside him was a middle aged man of little words that had been standing there ever since the start of the banquet.

And at this moment, his gaze shifted to Luo Qianqiu by the side as he stated, “Qianqiu, today will all depend on you.”

“The champion of the Jun Lin Banquet will most definitely be me.” Luo Qianqiu nodded his head in assurance. This was his destiny, obtaining the top ranking of the Jun Lin Banquet. He would definitely be the champion this year.

“I humbly request Uncle not to interfere in my battle with Sikong Mingyue. I don’t need him to give me any concessions, I want to fight him at his full power.” Luo Qianqiu spoke in a low voice. If this was heard by others, they would definitely be shocked by the implied meaning. Were there still manipulations within the shadows in the Jun Lin Banquet?

In this world, as long as one had enough strength, there would be no restrictions. The Jun Lin Banquet, was the same as well. “Very well.” The middle aged man nodded his head, yet he silently thought in his heart, Luo Qianqiu was still too young. Given how long he had lived, the middle aged man understood the logic that sometimes, to accomplish one’s objectives, it doesn’t matter what methods one used.

This time round, he came here with a mission. Luo Qianqiu had to ascend to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Which also meant that no matter what, Luo Qianqiu had to obtain the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet.

At this moment, Luo Qianqiu slowly strode forth, and an instant later, he stood atop the first towering platform.

Sikong Mingyue mirrored his actions, but walked to the 2nd towering platform instead. After all, he was in the second group.

Those that were fighting today all proceeded respectively to their assigned platforms. Very quickly, the silhouettes of eight people appeared on the three platforms. But yet, there was still one missing contestant.

On the 2nd towering platform, there were only two figures. Sikong Mingyue and Chu Chen stood there, but Qin Wentian was nowhere to be seen.

Today was the last battle of the Jun Lin Banquet, even if he wanted to be late, he shouldn't have chosen this moment.

Unless Qin Wentian didn't dare to come.

Chu Tianjiao didn't announce the start of the 3rd round, but chose to wait for a period of time instead. However, as time flowed by, Qin Wentian still didn't appear, which caused many people to start whispering to each other.

Unless, it was really because of fear? Qin Wentian was afraid to battle with Sikong Mingyue. But if this was the case, he could just have admitted defeat, why did he need to miss the Jun Lin Banquet?

Or could it be he was unable to bear the shame of admitting defeat, and thus intentionally wanted to skip the Jun Lin Banquet?

“This fellow, why hasn’t he appeared?” Mustang appeared slightly nervous as he looked at Ren Qianxing who was sitting behind him.

“There’s no need to disturb him, since he chose to do this, there has to be a reason behind it” Ren Qianxing calmly replied, causing Mustang to feel extremely astonished. Elder Ren actually had this much trust in Qin Wentian? It seems like no matter what Qin Wentian did, he would support him all the way.

Even if he missed the Jun Lin Banquet, he would definitely have a reason.

“Let the first battle commence.” Chu Tianjiao finally spoke, choosing not to wait any longer.

Standing atop the first towering platform, there was Luo Qianqiu, 2nd Sword and Luo Huan.

“The first battle, Luo Qianqiu versus 2nd Sword.” The aged figure beside Chu Tianjiao stated.

As Luo Huan walked to the side of the platform, leaving behind Luo Qianqiu and 2nd Sword, a terrifying aura gushed forth from both of them.

Terrifying arcs of lightning energy surrounded the entirety of Luo Qianqiu's body, crackling and howling in preparation.

The body of 2nd Sword was surrounded by a monstrous Sword Qi, gushing about so powerfully that it seemed it was mighty enough to split apart the Heavens.

"You are not my match." Luo Qianqiu glanced at the skies. The final round of the Jun Lin Banquet was finally here, he had waited for this moment since a very long time ago.

"Easy for you to say, we will only know if that's true after we fight." 2nd Sword dashed forwards, as his Sword Qi frenziedly gushed forth. At this moment, he was extremely dangerous.

Following 2nd Sword's relentless advance, the Sword Qi he emitted got stronger and stronger. His Sword Qi transformed into actual sword light as they pierced towards Luo Qianqiu. But, at this moment, Luo Qianqiu's aura surged madly, as though it was howling in anger.

The aura he emitted rose to the 9th level from the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. In his earlier battles, he had intentionally suppressed his cultivation base and fought at the power of the 8th level.

And now there was no need for him to suppress himself any longer. His true power exploded forth completely.

The Sword Qi gushing forth from 2nd Sword seemed to falter in its advance, but still, when it neared Luo Qianqiu's body, the Sword Qi manifested into a gigantic greatsword that smashed down from skies, as though it wanted to sunder both Heaven and Earth.

However, Luo Qianqiu merely glanced upwards as a faint illusion of a thunder god appeared behind his back. Pushing upwards with a palm created from lightning, he directly stopped the downwards slash of the gigantic sword, shattering it into countless pieces.

Boom. Stepping forwards, Luo Qianqiu vanished from sight while the lightning palm from before extended outwards, the terrifying energies within decimating everything.

2nd Sword madly slashed out, and at this moment, 10,000 filaments of sword light shot forth in all directions. However, the lightning palm transformed into the form of a python as it coiled around the filaments of sword light, while a current of terrifying lightning energy blasted into 2nd Sword, causing his body to convulse uncontrollably.

“Scram.” Luo Qianqiu sent a palm out as that lightning palm blasted into 2nd Sword, causing his body to be flung away from the impact. And when he finally landed, he bowed slightly to Luo Qianqiu, as he stated, “I concede.”

2nd Sword was totally convinced of his defeat.

“Luo Qianqiu is too powerful.” The hearts of many were

shuddering.

The spectators also finally understood why Luo Qianqiu's payout rates were computed as such. The Heaven's Wonder had already determined that he was the one destined to obtain the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet this year.

“The second battle, 2nd Sword versus Luo Huan.”

The aged figure spoke. Luo Qianqiu walked to the side and left the platform to Luo Huan and 2nd Sword.

Right from the beginning, 2nd Sword used his ultimate attack. The filaments of sword lights shot forth rapidly in the direction of Luo Huan, not even giving her the chance to breathe. Although she had perfect flexibility and close combat was her strong point, she didn't even have the chance to get close to 2nd Sword. Finally, with no suspense, Luo Huan was defeated.

Since this was the case, there was no longer any need for Luo Huan to fight with Qin Wentian.

The results for rankings of the 1st platform: Luo Qianqiu, followed by 2nd Sword and Luo Huan. Even though Luo Huan wasn't weak, when compared to the two of them, she could only be ranked the last.

The gaze of the spectators shifted over to the 2nd platform. Even now, Qin Wentian was missing, only Sikong Mingyue and Chu

Chen stood there.

Where the hell was Qin Wentian?

Did he really intend to dodge the Jun Lin Banquet?

AGM 134 – Arrival In The Nick Of Time

The aged figure beside Chu Tianjiao glanced towards the 2nd platform as he spoke, “Let the battle on the 3rd platform commence first.”

The Jun Lin banquet was the grandest event of Chu, it was just too much of a pity if one missed it. This old man was willing to give some more time to Qin Wentian, in hopes that he’d arrive in time.

“The first battle, Orchon versus Hou Tie.” The aged figure spoke, as Orchon and Hou Tie faced each other in opposition.

Orchon wielded a long spear in his hand, his Astral Soul flickering into existence. At this moment, his entire person was akin to a spear, it gave off a terrifyingly sharp sensation to others.

Raising his spear, he pointed it straight at Hou Tie. An instant later, spear light exploded outwards as he stepped forwards, his terrifyingly sharp aura rising frenziedly.

Hou Tie wasn’t one to be outdone. He released both of his Astral Souls.

His first Astral Soul was a Heavenly Ox, while his second Astral Soul was a White Tiger. Both of his Astral Souls belonged to the beast-type category. There was a connection between this and the environment he’d grown up in.

The Godly General Martial Palace was situated deep within the Dark Forest, and hadn't participated in any exchanges with the other Martial Academies. Their usual daily training was foraging in the wild and hunting demonic beasts for survival. Each and every one of their students had been tempered by these exceedingly violent training methods—engaging in combat with the different types of demonic beasts in the Dark Forest, and being defeated, equaled death.

In this type of environment, the majority of cultivators in the Godly General Martial Palace would naturally prefer beast-type Astral Souls. To them, beast-type Astral Souls were the greatest of all.

An incomparably violent aura gushed forth from Hou Tie. Every step of his caused the ground to trembled. His eyes were filled with red, and struck fear into the hearts of the spectators.

However, Orchon's aura didn't weaken in the slightest. As he strode forwards, his terrifying aura became increasingly monstrous, and a terrifying spiral appeared in front of him.

Abruptly, Orchon lunged forwards, his long spear piercing forwards as a stream of light appeared. Ripping sounds could be heard from the air, as if his spear wanted to tear the void apart.

Boom. Hou Tie directly punched forwards with his fist, directly connecting with Orchon's long spear. This caused the pupils of several in the crowd to narrow, wasn't this too arrogant? Using

one's bare fists to meet a sharp spear.

Naturally, Hou Tie also executed his innate technique. An unparalleled strength shook the long spear, causing the spear's body to shudder.

Abruptly, at the same instant, a cold light exploded forth from the spear head, piercing right into Hou Tie's eyes.

Hou Tie roared in anger, his whole person like a maddened beast as he rushed forward. His palm strikes had the force of a demonic beast—both incredibly powerful, and augmented by his aura of violence.

Orchon was as calm as before. Hou Tie's great strength wasn't able to shake his heart in the slightest. His countenance remained unperturbed, and gave off a sense of impending danger.

On the stage of the Jun Lin banquet, one had to be prepared for each and every battle.

Orchon sent out his left palm, as tens of thousands filaments of spear light burst out, piercing forwards in all directions. Hou Tie howled, and both of their attacks clashed together with frightening impact.

He actually chose to verse strength with strength.

An instant later, both of their silhouettes were covered by a layer

of terrifying Qi, one could even feel a fearsome aura pulsating in the atmosphere

The sharp sounds of a spear and the howl of a demonic beast echoed throughout the air. No one had predicted that Hou Tie was actually this strong, and was able to fight Orchon to such a degree.

“Time to end this.” Orchon calmly stated, as a column of spear light unfolded like a lotus, breaking apart Hou Tie’s attack and defence, and directly piercing into his arms, causing Hou Tie to retreat in defeat.

If he had no way to fight for the top three ranking, he could still try for the 4th to 6th position. It wasn’t worth it to continue the battle, and risk being seriously injured.

After a short respite, the second battle commenced. Hou Tie versus Gu Xing.

This battle wasn’t as fascinating as the first fight. Hou Tie and Gu Xing were both mad men, and went all out from the very beginning,

The degree of violence that they fought with left the spectators speechless. Weren’t they simply throwing their lives away?

Hou Tie was also speechless, to think that he’d share the same platform as this crazy guy. Initially, he was relieved that his group hadn’t had Luo Qianqiu or Sikong Mingyue. But now, if he lost this

battle, he'd only be able to contend for the 7th to 9th position. Against merely Gu Xing, he couldn't afford to lose.

The two of them fought with frenzy and no regards for their lives. Finally Hou Tie defeated Gu Xing, but had in turn expended the entirety of the Astral Energy in his body. Immediately afterwards, he sat down on the platform, and began using Yuan Meteor Stones to replenish his Astral Energy.

If the next fight was as crazy as this, he'd probably have to give up. Luckily, at the end, Gu Xing had seemed to relax slightly, and hadn't fought with his life on the line, which gave Hou Tie a narrow victory.

“Gu Xing seems to be able to continue still, but he actually chose to give up. It's as if his purpose for participating in the Jun Lin banquet wasn't because of the rankings.” The spectators murmured, wondering what Gu Xing was thinking. However, no matter what, a defeat was still a defeat.

The rankings of the 3rd Group were out. Orchon was first, Hou Tie was second, and Gu Xing was third.

Following which, only one more group remained. Yet, Qin Wentian still hadn't appeared.

“Sikong Mingyue, you will verse Chu Chen.” The aged figure spoke.

“I concede.” Chu Chen laughed, causing the spectators to be dumbfounded. But then again, it made sense.

It appeared that Chu Chen wanted to save his strength. Without Qin Wentian, he'd directly be ranked second. Since this was the case, he could contend for the 4th to 6th position. If he obtained the 4th rank, he'd then have the chance to challenge Orchon, and to contend for one of the top three positions. After all, he'd witnessed the martial prowess of 2nd Sword and Hou Tie earlier, and didn't dare to be careless. That was why he might as well concede directly, towards Sikong Mingyue.

“Although conceding would usually cause one to be castigated, Chu Chen made a wise decision.” The spectators were silently exclaiming that indeed, this Chu Chen was truly intelligent.

“Since that's the case, for this group, Sikong Mingyue will be ranked first, while Chu Chen shall be second.”

The aged figure started to announce the results. It seemed as though Qin Wentian had decided to miss this.

“Next, Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, and Orchon will proceed to the first towering platform in order to determine the top three positions.”

“Second Sword, Chu Chen, and Hou Tie, proceed to the 2nd towering platform in order to determine the 4th to 6th position.”

“Luo Huan and Gu Xing will contend for the 7th and 8th position on the 3rd towering platform. Any questions? If not, let the battles begin.”

The aged figure continued, announcing the end result, causing many to be filled with anticipation. Although Qin Wentian wasn't present, the following battles would still be fascinating to behold.

“Qin Wentian, you asshole!” Fan Le wanted to cry. He'd had such great hopes for Qin Wentian, but why hadn't he appeared, how could he not appear!?

If Qin Wentian fought, even if he didn't manage to get into the top three, Fan Le still wouldn't have minded it that much.

Many people felt regret for Qin Wentian. The elders from the academy, the people from the Mo Clan, Mu Clan, and Divine Weapon Pavilion, they were all sighing in their hearts.

“I saw Qin Wentian yesterday.” At this moment, within the crowd, a feeble sounding voice rang out, causing many to shift their gazes over to the owner of the voice.

“Yu Xuan, is what you say true? Where is Qin Wentian now?” An elder that Yu Xuan's teacher involuntarily asked after spotting her in the crowd.

“I saw him when I returned to the academy.” The young girl shyly spoke, as she gazed at the elders of the academy who were all

staring at her. Under the weight of their gazes, she couldn't help but feel a little nervous.

“He...Qin Wentian...I saw him walking out from the 6th level of the Astral River Hall.” Yu Xuan whispered weakly, and all of a sudden, the entire Chu Emperor District fell silent.

Qin Wentian walked out from the 6th level of the Astral River Hall?

Although many in the crowd weren't members of the Emperor Star Academy, they knew of famous landmarks such as the Heavenly Star Pavilion, Astral River Hall, and the Dreamsky Forest. Unless they weren't from Chu.

And for those that knew of the Astral River Hall, they naturally understood what it meant for Qin Wentian to be said to have stepped onto the 6th level.

“Are you kidding?” A cold voice drifted over. Qiu Mo stood up from his seat. As a Yuanfu Realm student, he'd naturally have a seat allocated to him for this Banquet.

“That time in the Astral River Hall, didn't he stop at the 4th level? You actually said that he came out from the 6th level? Not to mention Qin Wentian, even all of the elders present here today have never once stepped onto the 6th level.” Qiu Mo coldly refuted. “Yu Xuan, this is not the place for you to speak of your crap.”

The spectators all nodded their heads. Qiu Mo made sense. How ludicrous were Yu Xuan's words? Even if she'd said the 5th level, they would've still found it unbelievable.

"I personally witnessed it." Yu Xuan grew red as she heard Qiu Mo's rebuttal, and exclaimed angrily.

"What an ignorant lass." Qiu Mo coldly snorted, "Did you also step onto the 5th level, or the 6th level, and also see him walk out from there?"

"No, but..."

"Since it's no, then shut the f*ck up." Qiu Mo replied coldly, "You have no rights to talk in the Jun Lin banquet, get lost."

Yu Xuan actually still wanted to continue, but after hearing Qiu Mo's words, she gave up and faded into the background.

"Since you know that this is the grand stage of the Jun Lin banquet, then what qualifications do you have to talk?" Abruptly, another voice drifted out. The crowd turned around, trying to see who the owner of the voice was, only to see a youthful silhouette walking slowly out from within the crowd, with a snowy white puppy trotting beside him.

The youth that appeared was naturally Qin Wentian. And upon seeing his appearance, smiles lit up on the faces of many in the crowd.

Qin Wentian had finally appeared!

“You almost gave this fatty a heart attack.” Fan Le patted his chest, as he exclaimed somewhat depressingly. This fellow was finally here!

AGM 135 – Emperor Amethyst Constellation

Qin Wentian approached the platform, inclining his head and gazing at Qiu Mo in the spectator's stand. A hint of sarcasm could be seen on his face.

When he arrived, he'd coincidentally heard Yu Xuan's words. Although he wasn't acquainted with Yu Xuan, he wouldn't have specially felt goodwill because of the words she'd said. However, Qiu Mo's reply made him extremely dissatisfied.

Yu Xuan said that he'd stepped onto the 6th level of the Astral River Hall. Regardless of whether or not this was true or false, didn't this matter have nothing to do with Qiu Mo? What right did Qiu Mo have to berate others? Not only that, but Qiu Mo's rebuttal was extremely strong, obviously showing that he had a bone to pick with Qin Wentian.

Upon noticing Qin Wentian, Qiu Mo frowned, and coldly continued, "Don't tell me you've really stepped onto the 6th level? Even if you had, I'm still your senior. You'd better show some respect when talking to me."

"Respect is earned, not given. Look at the way you treat your junior sister. Are you even worthy of other's respect?" Qin Wentian countered.

"Hehe, you're only in the top nine, why are you acting like you've already obtained the championship? How disgraceful." Qiu Mo shot back, his words filled with intense sarcasm, causing the

spectators to display weird expressions on their faces. Weren't both of them students of the Emperor Star Academy? Why were they so against each other?

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze away, and didn't bother to continue looking at Qiu Mo. He jumped into the air, and stepped onto the platform.

Despite Qin Wentian's disregard of Qiu Mo, Fan Le felt extremely dissatisfied. He shouted from below the platform, "In the Jun Lin banquet last year, someone at the peak of Arterial Circulation only managed to obtain the 5th position. I wonder which corner he was hiding in to only have a cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. To think that he had the face to be so sarcastic with others, if people didn't know, they'd have thought that he was the champion of the Jun Lin banquet last year."

Fan Le's words caused Qiu Mo's countenance to freeze, and for his gaze towards Fan Le to be filled with a glint of cold light.

"With so many elders of the Emperor Star Academy gathered here, someone actually still dares to spout so much arrogant claptrap. For those who don't know the situation, they might've thought that this person holds an extremely high position to the elders of the academy." Fan Le continued, causing the expression on Qiu Mo's face to turn exceedingly ugly to behold. Sensing the multitude of gazes on him, Qiu Mo sat down, trembling in anger. He wanted nothing more than to split Fan Le apart with his palms at this very moment.

Qin Wentian stood atop the platform, countless gazes riveted on

his body. As for the Yu Xuan's words earlier, the spectators had already shoved them to the back of their mind. After all, they didn't really believe Yu Xuan's words, they'd prefer to watch the fascinating final battle of the Jun Lin Banquet.

"I, shouldn't be considered too late, right?" Qin Wentian smiled, inclining his head, as rays of sunshine shone upon his face. He was late because of a nightmare he'd had last night: he dreamt that he'd almost been devoured by his own bloodline limit, but luckily, he'd persevered, and after waking up, he spent a period of time recovering, before directly rushing here.

How could he not be present, and miss the final round of the Jun Lin Banquet?

"Uncle Black, I know you'll pay attention to the Jun Lin banquet today, and observe me." Qin Wentian gazed at the sky as he murmured in his heart. That damn old fogey should also be observing him too, he guessed.

Not only that, but there were still the expectations of the teachers of the Emperor Star Academy. Mo Qingcheng, Mu Rou, Luo Huan, Fatty, and those at the Divine Weapon Pavilion. How could he let them down?

"Senior, I apologise. But luckily, I arrived here in the nick of time, and hope Senior will pardon me for my lateness." Qin Wentian spoke to the aged figure standing beside the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat.

“You’ve already missed the group battle, not only that, but the rankings are already out. Tell me, what do you think I should do?” The aged figure gazed at Qin Wentian, seeming filled with unhappiness. After all, Qin Wentian had come late despite his efforts earlier, when he’d intentionally stalled the battle, and allowed the others to proceed first.

“But the final ranking shouldn’t have started right?” Qin Wentian stared at the three towering platforms, and saw Luo Huan and Gu Xing standing alone on the 3rd platform.

“The rankings of each group have already been determined. Next is the contest for the overall ranking.” The aged figure spoke.

“Since that’s the case, could Senior treat me as conceding for two of the earlier rounds at the group battles?” Qin Wentian inquired. Since he was late, this was an appropriate punishment.

The aged figure contemplated, and nodded his head. “Since you missed two battles at the group stage, it’s only natural to be considered your loss. Since that’s the case, I shall announce that you will join those at the 3rd towering platform, and compete for the 7th to 9th ranking.”

“Thank you Senior.” Qin Wentian bowed, and his body flickered, appearing atop the 3rd platform.

There were already two silhouettes there. They were none other than Luo Huan and Gu Xing.

“Brat, you actually dared to be late for such an important event.” Luo Huan glared at Qin Wentian.

“Well, I made it in time, eventually.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Are you confident?” Luo Huan asked.

“I guess so.” Qin Wentian lightly nodded. He hadn’t slept well last night, and time was too tight. What a pity that the Jun Lin banquet couldn’t be pushed back slightly later.

“Okay. The first battle, Luo Huan versus Qin Wentian.” The aged figure remarked. Luo Huan smiled as she glanced at Qin Wentian, before speaking to the aged figure. “Senior, I concede this battle.”

Luo Huan conceded, helping Qin Wentian accomplish his aim, and allowing him to pursue the rank that belonged to him.

As long as Qin Wentian was able to obtain the 7th rank, he’d gain a chance to contend for an even high position.

“Noted. The second battle, Gu Xing versus Qin Wentian.” The aged figure continued.

“I give up.” Gu Xing spoke, causing the spectators to be dumbfounded.

There was no need to be so dramatic, was there?

Two of them actually gave up directly, just for the sake of Qin Wentian?

“How about the both of you? Do you two want to battle?” The aged figure gazed at Luo Huan and Gu Xing.

“There’s no need for that. I give up as well.” Gu Xing calmly replied, after which, he closed his eyes and sat down on the ground, ignoring all other events that transpired.

Such a scene happening caused many to feel regret. The rankings of those on the 3rd platform were actually concluded without any battles? They could only hope that the other battles would be more fascinating.

“Qin Wentian obtains the 7th rank; Luo Huan, 8th; Gu Xing, 9th.” The aged figure announced, his gaze shifting over to the 2nd towering platform.

On this platform, the contestants were 2nd Sword, Chu Chen, and Hou Tie.

“The first battle, 2nd Sword versus Hou Tie.”

As the voice of the aged figure faded away, the tension in the air was palpable, and the gaze of the spectators were filled with anticipation.

2nd Sword was extremely powerful, but he was unlucky to met

Luo Qianqiu, and was thus defeated. However, he used his absolute sword attacks, and easily suppressed Luo Huan. These type of sword strikes were hegemonic and tyrannical, giving a feel that was similar to the Orchon's terrifyingly sharp spear.

According to the payout rates computed by Drunken Wonder, both 2nd Sword and Hou Tie had obtained a high level of recognition, and had a chance of entering the top three. Now that the two of them were clashing, the crowd's gaze was filled with anticipation. Who exactly would emerge victorious?

Both of their Astral Souls were released at the same moment. 2nd Sword wielded a violent and ferocious sharp sword, while Hou Tie transformed into a terrifying ancient demon. Both of them took off and slammed into each other in the next instant.

The terrifying impact caused by their collision caused the hearts of the spectators to palpitate wildly. The entire platform seemed to be covered with a layer of violent demonic Qi and sword light, and powerful attacks could be heard from within.

Roar.

After several moments, Hou Tie suddenly continually roared out nine times, shaking both heaven and earth. That violent demonic fist of his beast form extinguished the sword light, as he punched a fist into the defensive sword Qi barrier of 2nd Sword, causing 2nd Sword to be lifted up into the air by the force of his attacks.

Hou Tie hadn't finished his attacks. He jumped up into the sky,

and as he caught up to 2nd Sword, he punched 2nd Sword twice, smashing 2nd Sword into the ground.

Hou Tie won against 2nd Sword, causing many people to exclaim in wonder.

Too terrifying. It seemed like the power level of each individual was directly related to the payout rates computed by Heaven's Wonder. However, it was also not completely accurate.

Hou Tie's rating, by Heaven's Wonder, was slightly lower when compared to 2nd Sword. But yet, he was the victor.

"Take a break for now. For the battle on the first platform, Orchon will verse Sikong Mingyue," The aged figure calmly spoke. The sequence of the battles had actually been jumbled up. This way, the contestant who'd just fought could rest, and the proceedings of Jun Lin banquet wouldn't be delayed.

There was no suspense in the battle of Orchon fighting against Sikong Mingyue. Although Orchon was powerful, Sikong Mingyue after all, was still Sikong Mingyue. And just as the payout rates indicated, he easily secured one of the top two positions of the Jun Lin banquet. Although, based on logic and the rules of the Banquet alone, there might still be a chance for him to fall from the top two rankings. However, this probability was close to nil—so low that no one even bothered to think about it.

And as for Qin Wentian, he was sitting down cross-leggedly at this moment, and was quietly practicing his cultivation. It was as

though everything happening in the external world had no connection to him.

He hadn't completely mastered the 2nd Stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art – Falling Star. How could he afford to waste time?

After this, he'd face the most intense battles he'd ever faced in his life, and thus, had to condition his state to the peak.

“2nd Sword versus Chu Chen.” The aged figure's voice drifted over again, and the gaze of the crowd became fixated on the 2nd towering platform.

2nd Sword had already lost a match. This time around, no matter what, he wouldn't allow himself to be defeated. If not, Snowcloud's face would really be reduced to almost nothing.

Chu Chen had directly conceded earlier, when faced Sikong Mingyue, saving up his strength. Nobody knew how strong he was exactly.

However now, the instant that he clashed with 2nd Sword, Chu Chen released his Astral Souls for the first time ever in the competition.

“His Astral Soul, what exactly is that? It's unexpectedly in the shape of a scepter?” Someone in the crowd exclaimed in amazement as he stared at one of the Astral Souls of Chu Chen.

“Amethyst Astral Soul. This is actually an Astral Soul condensed from the Emperor Amethyst Constellation, that symbolises the will of Emperors. To think that Chu Chen actually had the ability to form an innate link with that constellation. Isn’t this the same Astral Soul as Chu Tianjiao’s first Astral Soul?” Someone remarked from within the spectators.

In the nine Astral Rivers above the Heavens, there were many fascinating and mysterious constellations. The Emperor Amethyst Constellation was exactly one of those.

AGM 136 – The Top Three Rankers

The Nine Astral Rivers were filled with incredible secrets, there would be some abnormal constellations that had a possibility to appear in any of the Heavenly Layers.

However, there were also some constellations that not everyone would be able to form an innate link with. These types of constellations typically chose their own masters, sending out a powerful attraction to the Stellar Martial Cultivator as the cultivators wandered in the Heavenly Layer. This would direct their consciousness over, allowing them to form innate links and then condense an Astral Soul from that particular constellation.

Chu Tianjiao and Chu Chen, were both people from the Royal Clan, but to think that they both actually had the destiny of an emperor, as evident from the fact that they condensed an Astral Soul from the Amethyst Emperor Star. This caused many in the crowd to be astonished.

Citizens of Chu would naturally understand the power of the Amethyst Emperor Astral Soul. This particular Astral Soul was in the shape of a scepter, and was able to boost the user's power in any forms of attacks. Not only that, the Amethyst Emperor Astral Soul was also able to augment the strength of other Astral Souls of the user.

Since Chu Chen had an Amethyst Astral Soul, this meant that in the battles earlier, he had always been hiding his strength and had never gone all out.

But now, he finally unleashed his full power.

As for the 2nd Astral Soul of Chu Chen, it took the form of a palm imprint. One could imagine that the constellation he condensed this Astral Soul from was most definitely a gigantic palm-type constellation.

“Please.” Chu Chen smiled as the gaze of 2nd Sword grew heavy, as he released rays of sword light.

Chu Chen took a step forwards as both of his palms wavered. His Astral Soul flowed over and covered his palms, as inexhaustible might blasted out, attacking 2nd Sword in a frenzy.

“What a swift attack speed.” The pupils of the crowd narrowed, they saw countless palm shadows striking out within an instant.

Although 2nd Sword was powerful, the palm shadows were too much for the eyes to take in. He slashed out in a fluster, trying to defend hopelessly.

The swift sword was akin to the wind, yet 2nd Sword was unable to block the barrage of palm strikes. And eventually, Chu Chen overpowered 2nd Sword. He would be fighting with Hou Tie to determine the 4th ranking of the Jun Lin Banquet.

“Next, Orchon versus Luo Qianqiu.” The aged figure stated, and the gazes of the spectators shifted onto the 1st towering platform.

This was a battle with no suspense; although Orchon was powerful, he was nothing before Luo Qianqiu. As expected of the genius with the highest probability of obtaining the championship, Luo Qianqiu easily suppressed Orchon.

The spectators could only sigh in wonder. Luo Qianqiu was too powerful, only Sikong Mingyue would be able to give him a run for his money.

And following the conclusion of the battle between Luo Qianqiu and Orchon, it was as though the spectators were able to predict that the most intense battle would be coming soon. After the battle of Hou Tie and Chu Chen, it would be Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue's turn to fight for the number one ranking.

“Chu Chen versus Hou Tie.”

As the sound of the aged figure's voice faded, the final deciding battle just started on the 2nd towering platform.

Chu Chen gazed at Hou Tie, his countenance calm, as he slowly spoke. “You are not my match, there's no need to risk your life over this. After defeating you, I will go challenge those on the 1st platform for one of the top three rankings.”

The hearts of the spectators couldn't help but slightly tremble as they heard the words of Chu Chen. Chu Chen conceded in his previous match against Sikong Mingyue, so the spectators didn't really have a good opinion of him. However, no one thought that Chu Chen had intentionally avoided Sikong Mingyue so that he

could obtained the 4th ranking on the 2nd towering platform and challenge the top three in almost perfect condition.

In actual fact, the confidence of Chu Chen came from his level of strength. Although Hou Tie was extremely tyrannical, Chu Chen still defeated him, and from this, obtained the 4th rank along with the qualifications to challenge those at the 1st platform for the top three rankings.

After this battle, Chu Chen was ranked 4th, Hou Tie 5th, while 2nd Sword was 6th.

And at this moment, the gazes of the spectators shifted to the 1st platform.

Was the final battle that would determine everything going to begin now?

“The battle between Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue will be pushed back, while Chu Chen will fight Orchon. If Chu Chen loses, the top three rankings will be fixed, but if Chu Chen wins, there will be another battle again to determine who will be the top three rankers.” The aged figure broke the wishes of the spectators with a single sentence. But this was also good, at least they could see who was the stronger one between Chu Chen and Orchon.

“The final battle to proclaim the top three rankers?” In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, Old Man Gu laughed, “You seemed to have forgotten a person.”

The spectators had a dumbfounded expression on their faces, as they shifted their gaze onto the lone silhouette that was currently cultivating on top of the 3rd towering platform.

Very obviously, Old Gu was referring to Qin Wentian. But what did he meant by that? Did that mean that Qin Wentian had the capabilities to contend for the top three positions?

The two great barriers that were 2nd Sword and Hou Tie, could Qin Wentian even pass them?

“After the battle between Orchon and Chu Chen has concluded, I will give him a chance, to see if he has the power to climb up there.” The aged figure calmly replied.

At the start, 2nd Sword received the most recognition but was eventually the 6th ranked. From this, one could see how strong the contestants in the final top nine were.

Qin Wentian wanted to climb up the ranks step by step to obtain the championship? This was mission impossible.

If only he could break through to the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, based on Qin Wentian’s strength and martial prowess, he might still have a chance to contend for the top three positions. However, a breakthrough doesn’t come simply by saying that. Cultivation could be likened to taking a step forward with each footprint. One would naturally be required to accumulate Astral Energy in addition to assiduously cultivating before one could break through. Although Yuan Meteor Stones and other precious

spiritual medicine was able to increase the rate of cultivation, it was still impossible for one to break through by merely saying that.

“Prince Chu, for the position of the top three rankers, you won’t be able to steal it from me.” Orchon’s voice was filled with a strong sense of self-confidence. Although he had very good relations with Chu Chen, this was a battle of glory, and thus he would still go all out.

“Orchon, although you are powerful, the positions of the top three rankers definitely belong to me. Not only that, I will avenge your losses from earlier, and will help you challenge both Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue. Since you’ve already been defeated by them, shouldn’t you relinquish your position and allow me to take over?”

Chu Chen’s voice was filled with immense confidence, both of them believed that they would definitely win.

Orchon, had already obtained one of the top three positions, and if he was ousted, how would he still have face?

“Orchon, you have to win!” There were many in the crowd that had bet on Orchon. At this moment, they were all silently praying, hoping that Orchon would be the victor. If not, their Yuan Meteor Stones would all fly away.

“Since that’s the case, let’s fight” Orchon wielded his long spear, as his intent to battle soared to the skies. He had already lost to Luo

Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue. This battle was fought for the sake of glory.

As a fierce wind billowed by, the spear's shadows were akin to a dream as a silver light flashed. And when he clashed against Chu Chen, the platform was covered with a meteor of spear rain, resplendent and dazzling.

However, Chu Chen's response was to send out a single fist, extinguishing the rain of spears. He looked at Orchon as he calmly stated, "To indicate my respect to you, I will show you my true strength. Now, show me your ultimate attack."

As the sound of his voice faded, within Chu Chen's body, the sounds of his blood surging could be heard, as his body seemed to get taller and stronger.

The royal clan of Chu possessed the Emperor Bloodline. This was also why they were the rulers of Chu for over 3,000 years.

The Amethyst Astral Soul, along with the Emperor Bloodline, in addition to the hard work of the countless generations of the Royal Clan created the 3,000 year history of Chu.

In this cultivation-oriented world, governance was always built upon a solid foundation of might and power.

Orchon froze, as he lamented. "I didn't think that Prince Chen had already awakened his bloodline limit. Since this is the case, I

won't be polite any longer.”

Feeling the power of Chu Chen's bloodline limit, Orchon understood that the probability of him being the victor was becoming increasingly smaller.

“Could it be that Orchon will really be defeated? This black horse Chu Chen is going to slaughter his path into the top three positions?” Many people felt extremely vexed by this. Were they tricked by Heaven's Wonder? Or to put it better, Heaven's Wonder didn't know of the strength Chu Chen was hiding.

Orchon pierced out with his long spear, his attacks akin to the bloom of a lotus. Millions of filaments of spear light exploded simultaneously, covering the entire sky. Ultimately, an Astral Spear containing the entirety of Orchon's might was formed, flying forwards with his full power.

The bloodline limit of Chu Chen stacked together with the augmentation effect of his Amethyst Astral Soul as he blasted out a palm. Under the double layer of augmentation, only Orchon understood the terrifyingness of his palm strikes as Chu Chen easily halted his strongest attack.

At this point, Orchon understood that he has already lost.

Inclining his head and looking at Chu Chen, Orchon sighed. “I still thought that this time round I would be able to enter the top three. To think that I ended up 4th in the end. But based on strength, it's only natural for Prince Chen to be one of the top

three rankers.”

After finishing what he wanted to say, Orchon bowed slightly to Chu Chen, indicating his respect.

“You are already very powerful to have obtained 4th. It’s only because the contestants this year are all too powerful. We can still compete on who will break through to Yuanfu first. After breaking into Yuanfu, let’s spar again.” Chu Chen laughed.

“Right.” Orchon nodded as he gave a carefree laugh, no longer bothered about the fact that he lost.

Being able to obtain 4th while participating in such an intense Jun Lin Banquet could already be considered pretty good.

At this moment, the top three rankers were all unveiled – Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue and Chu Chen. But as to who was what ranking, they would still need to participate in one final round of battle.

The 4th to 6th ranking could also be temporarily confirmed – Orchon, Hou Tie and 2nd Sword. Now, the only variable was Qin Wentian.

However, although Qin Wentian’s strength was extraordinary, not many people thought highly of him. After all, if he wanted to advance forwards, the first barrier he would have to overcome was 2nd Sword.

At this moment, what the spectators anticipated the most was the final deciding battle of the top three rankers.

The gaze of the aged figure shifted onto the sitting down cross-legged Qin Wentian, as he inquired. “Do you still intend to battle?”

Qin Wentian opened his eyes as he paused his cultivation. “Naturally.”

“Fine, your first battle will be against 2nd Sword.” The aged figure spoke, as the gaze of 2nd Sword shifted onto Qin Wentian. An extremely sharp aura could be felt emanating from him. He was one of those who was thought to be very likely to rank among the top three, but now, he was actually ranked the 6th.

And today, Qin Wentian actually still dared to challenge him. What humiliation.

The tyrannical air was inundated with boundless sword intent. 2nd Sword inclined his head, as both of his eyes shot out two rays of sword light, piercing in the direction of Qin Wentian.

“Since you wish to court death, I will aid you with that. I will avenge 3rd Night.”

The voice of 2nd Sword was as sharp as real swords.

His whole person radiated a terrifying sword presence.

Within his sword, there was arrogance, unwillingness, and killing intent.

He wanted Qin Wentian to bleed, using his blood to wash away the humiliation of the Jun Lin Banquet. Snowcloud was actually defeated so miserably, only Sikong Mingyue obtained one of the top three positions, while other than that, he, 2nd Sword, was the only one ranked within the top nine positions.

AGM 137 – Fighting Orchon

The killing intent released by 2nd Sword even caused the spectators to feel traces of coldness.

Qin Wentian had executed 3rd Night, and the fact that 2nd Sword's continual defeats placed him in the 6th rank, in addition to Qin Wentian's challenge, one could well imagine what 2nd Sword was feeling right now.

He had to kill Qin Wentian to appease the raging flames of anger in his heart, to wash clean the humiliation of the two consecutive defeats he suffered earlier.

“Qin Wentian is in danger.” Many of the spectators were thinking in their hearts. 2nd Sword wanted to claim Qin Wentian's life with his sword.

And finally, 2nd Sword's Sword Qi erupted forth as a terrifying sword light descended from the skies, slashing towards Qin Wentian.

With the ancient halberd in his hands, Qin Wentian's silhouette flickered and disappeared from sight as the sword light slashed past his side, lacerating the platform. However, Qin Wentian didn't seem the slightest bit affected by this display of 2nd Sword's strength. He calmly stood at the side with the ancient halberd in his hands and remained as serene as before.

Bursting into motion, 2nd Sword dashed towards Qin Wentian as

his sword fingers flicked out. An inexhaustible amount of sword rays slashed forth, akin to rivers of swords.

Qin Wentian executed his movement technique to its utmost limits, causing a faint shadow of a pair of Garuda Wings to appear on his back. Images of shadows flashing could be seen in the air, as the rays of sword light eradicated everything.

“KILL.” 2nd Sword howled in anger. A sword shadow pierced in the direction of Qin Wentian’s true body.

A terrifying storm engulfed the entire platform, as the surroundings were lacerated.

Buzz. Qin Wentian finally started his attack. Unleashed, the Azure Dragon Stance manifested the illusory image of an azure dragon. The dragon’s roar slammed against 2nd Sword’s sword rays, but was extinguished shortly after by their sharpness.

At the same time, however, Qin Wentian sent out a palm strike with his left hand as the pressure of a mountain pressed down. The speed of his attacks left everyone speechless.

The sword rays appeared again as 2nd Sword slashed out horizontally.

Chi! Qin Wentian spat out a ray of sword light, as his body flickered, jumping up into the air. This caused the pupils of the crowd to narrow in shock. This fellow, wasn’t he afraid of death?

2nd Sword wanted to kill him, and Qin Wentian was still not at Yuanfu, unable to fly in the air. No matter what, he had to land sooner or later. Wasn't this giving 2nd Sword an excellent opportunities to prepare his attacks?

However, they soon realised how wrong they were. In the air, Qin Wentian was akin to a real Garuda. He could actually soar in the skies! The hegemonic stances of the Azure Dragon and White Tiger were frenziedly unleashed, erupting forwards with numerous attacks in an instant. Simultaneously, he also spat out countless razor sharp rays of sword light and sent out countless Revolving Sea Imprints with his left palm.

Not only that, both his feet actually executed the Falling Mountain Palms while he was soaring in the air. This went beyond logic, and the incomparable violence of his innate techniques covered the entire ground, akin to an angry god unleashing his wrath, pressuring 2nd Sword so much that even his sword strikes became chaotic. The spectators had never witnessed a variety of attacks of this magnitude unleashed by a single person. This way of fighting left all of them dumbfounded.

“The rate of expenditure of his Astral Energy should be very immense, right?” The spectators were speechless.

2nd Sword completely gave up on attacking and was focused purely on defense. The sword light enveloped 2nd Sword in a forcefield so guarded to the point where even rain and wind wasn't able to penetrate it. Even after Qin Wentian landed, his forcefield of Sword Qi was still on, incomparably shiny and resplendent.

However, the spectators had an extremely bizarre expression on their faces. Qin Wentian's attack speed was too quick to the point where it looked as though 2nd Sword was the only contestant to be dancing with his sword wildly on the stage, appearing somewhat clownish.

Naturally, 2nd Sword also realised this. The sword rays gradually faded as he released his defense, but at that very instant, Qin Wentian made his move.

It was as if 2nd Sword had forgotten that Qin Wentian was famed for his speed.

2nd Sword also seemed to have forgotten how 3rd Night had been killed.

The Mountain Splitter Stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art smashed out. 2nd Sword's reaction turned sluggish, like he was in a dream. Breaking apart his now-flimsy defense, the halberd sent 2nd Swords weapon flying through the air as the halberd continued smashing forwards, piercing into his brain.

The crowd saw 2nd Sword opening his mouth, about to admit defeat. However, there were no more opportunities left. Before he could open his mouth to concede, his life had already reached its ending point.

"It's this stance again." The gazes of the spectators froze, as well as their countenance.

This attack had been too quick and ferocious. 3rd Night died under this halberd strike, and today, 2nd Sword followed 3rd Night into hell the same way.

“2nd Sword was too careless. The instant he retracted his defensive Sword Qi forcefield, Qin Wentian moved with the speed of lightning and struck with the force of thunder, extinguishing his life.”

“2nd Sword was powerful indeed. What a pity; yet another fallen genius on the grand stage of the Jun Lin Banquet.”

Many people were sighing in their hearts. However, opportunities only came once. If 2nd Sword knew the ending, he would definitely not have acted the way he did, completely revealing his killing intent against Qin Wentian.

Following the defeat of 2nd Sword, Sikong Mingyue was the last contestant from Snowcloud remaining.

His hatred for Qin Wentian should be so deep that it seeped into his bone.

“Since you wish to court death, i shall aid you with that.” Qin Wentian pulled out his ancient halberd that was lodged in 2nd Sword’s head.

With immense unwillingness and hopelessness, 2nd Sword

stopped thinking forever as his body fell unceremoniously from the platform.

Hailing from Snowcloud, 2nd Sword had been one of the contestants with the highest probability to contend for the position of the top three ranks, but today, he died in a place far from his hometown.

The gazes of many people in the crowd shifted onto Sikong Mingyue. An intense killing intent could be felt emanating from his body. His sharp eyes were observing Qin Wentian's every movement, and his desire to kill was unconcealed in the slightest.

"You had better not step onto the first towering platform." Sikong Mingyue breathed heavily. The reason why Qin Wentian killed two elites of Snowcloud was because he had exhibited his intent to kill Luo Huan.

How could he, Sikong Mingyue, leave this unavenged?

At this moment, a strong desire arose in him. He half hoped that Qin Wentian would be able to slaughter his path all the way up to be one of the top three rankers. When that happened, he would fully be able to unleash his fury.

"Wait for me." Qin Wentian calmly stared back at Sikong Mingyue.

The first towering platform where the top three rankers

gathered, he would definitely be on it.

Since he had missed his chance to duel with Sikong Mingyue earlier, this time around, he would definitely slaughter his way up the ranks and walk onto the grand stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, where the strongest reside.

“Was that previous halberd strike Qin Wentian’s trump card? It’s indeed extremely powerful. Following this, he would face off against Hou Tie. Despite Hou Tie’s defense, it’s highly probable that his defense will still be broken by Qin Wentian.” The spectators were all silently speculating while the aged figure inquired, “Do you need to rest?”

“Maybe after the next battle.” Qin Wentian serenely replied.

“Fine. The next battle, Qin Wentian versus Hou Tie.” The aged figure spoke as Hou Tie walked forwards to stand in front of Qin Wentian. He had already obtained the 5th ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet, but to think that even now, he would still meet a challenger such as Qin Wentian.

Orchon also gazed at Qin Wentian. As long as he defeated Hou Tie, Qin Wentian would then possess the qualifications to stand in front of him.

He obviously never predicted that Qin Wentian, who was missing earlier, would actually still had a chance to face off against him.

“You are not my opponent, and I don’t wish to waste my strength. Would you please step aside?”

Qin Wentian gazed at Hou Tie. His serene voice had no hints of arrogance in it, yet it gave people a sense of dominance.

He actually wanted Hou Tie to step aside for him.

“Are you not too confident of your own strength? Although you killed 2nd Sword, it’s not so easy if you want to win against me.” Hou Tie coldly remarked. Was Qin Wentian trying to humiliate him?

“You mean you can withstand the force of my halberd strike from before?” Qin Wentian asked.

“Although that halberd attack was powerful, it doesn’t mean that I have no way to defend against it.” Hou Tie contemplated for a moment before he seriously replied. He had clearly seen the attack Qin Wentian unleashed on 2nd Sword.

“Perhaps, but you have not truly experienced it yourself.” As the sound of Qin Wentian’s voice faded away, the aura around him also changed. The ancient halberd smashed forwards with an unbelievable speed. At this very moment, Hou Tie’s gaze was frozen in place; it was as though he felt that this strike was unblockable.

Qin Wentian didn’t followed through with his attack. Instead, he

was merely showing the futility of Hou Tie's continued insistence.

"I don't wish for there to be another meaningless sacrifice. Even if you defend against this strike of mine, what happens if I execute it continuously?" Qin Wentian further inquired.

Hou Tie went silent, and an instant later, he spoke. "The expenditure of Astral Energy should be exceedingly great regarding that strike of yours. How will you continue to battle?"

"You mean you intend to use your life to gamble with me? To test the depths of my stored Astral Energy?" Qin Wentian countered, leaving Hou Tie speechless.

The two contestants stood on the stage, and a few breaths of time later, Hou Tie spoke once again. "I grew up in the Dark Forest and hunted countless demonic beasts. I condensed two beast-type Astral Souls and am unmatched among my peers. However, your attacks actually reached such a level despite your cultivation base at the 7th level. Can I just ask this, what halberd stance is that? What's the grade of that innate technique? And where did it originated from?"

"The Great Dream Halberd Art's opening stance, Mountain Splitter. As for what grade this innate technique belongs to, even I have no idea, because this was my own creation." Qin Wentian replied, causing many to draw in their breaths.

The level of power contained within that strike of his actually originated from an innate technique he created?

If what he said was true, Qin Wentian was indeed a cultivation genius.

Hou Tie froze upon hearing Qin Wentian's words. After this, he bowed in thanks to Qin Wentian. "What you can do is something that I can never do. Seems like for all the good of my self-proclaimed genius, I'm nothing but a frog in a well staring at the boundless skies. Although this is the furthest I can go based on my abilities, this decision to participate in the Jun Lin Banquet was well worth it."

After which, he walked to the sides, lamenting the fact that he wasn't not as good as others, and conceded directly. His actions also caused many in the crowd to be in shock as their heart shuddered.

This Hou Tie seemed like a barbarian, but in reality this was not the case. For a person such as him, how could he not have his own beliefs and dreams?

After Hou Tie's admission of defeat, Qin Wentian entered into the top five with merely a single battle. Next, he would face off against Orchon!

As long as he defeated Orchon, he would then obtain the qualifications to contend for the top three positions!

This caused many in the crowd to sigh in wonder. The ranking battles of the Jun Lin Banquet that transpired today had been an

unpredictable roller coaster ride!

AGM 138 – Unable To Block My Path

At this moment, there were only 4 other contestants ranked in front of Qin Wentian – Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen and Orchon.

These four people were undoubtedly the strongest four as perceived by the spectators. However, a variable now appeared – Qin Wentian.

“Based on Qin Wentian’s strength, he should still be able to deal with Orchon. However if he wanted to contend for one of the top three rankings, it’s almost impossible. After all, everyone witnessed the level of power Chu Chen exploded forth with earlier,” the spectators speculated. At this moment, the aged figure beside Chu Tianjiao announced that Qin Wentian would face off against Orchon.

There was a reason behind the grudge between Orchon and Qin Wentian. That day, when Qin Wentian just entered the Royal Capital and participated in the Martial Academies’ Selection Examination, Orchon b sat on the world like a ruler, disdaining everything. Qin Wentian was merely an ant-like existence that didn’t even have the qualifications to be regarded in his eyes.

However, in the short span of a year’s time, Qin Wentian appeared on the grand stage of the Jun Lin Banquet directly in front of him.

Such a scenario couldn’t help but to cause people to sigh, most of

all Orchon himself.

Orchon didn't say anything. He directly stabbed his spear towards Qin Wentian. The two of them had no need to exchange words since it was obvious that they wanted each other's lives.

The long spear broke apart the void, akin to the blooming of a lotus. That resplendent spear light appeared on the stage once again, as dazzling as before.

Orchon exploded forth with all his strength in his first attack.

"This..." Many were speechless. To their surprise, Qin Wentian thought the same as Orchon, executing Mountain Splitter right off the bat. This halberd strike of his was comparable to a peerless expert. As it collided with the spear light, a terrifying gale was born.

Orchon's spear shook again, as spear light once again exploded out. The blooming lotuses were born and extinguished, over and over. The spear light seemed to be eternal.

Qin Wentian's Mountain Splitter similarly blasted out once again, and both of their attacks clashed in a terrifying frenzy. Qin Wentian's Mountain Splitter attack was powered by the Mountain-type Divine Yuan Energy, which went to show how powerful Orchon's attack had to be in order to match it.

The two of them refused to even retreat half a step. For the third

time, their attacks collided with each other once again.

This time around, Qin Wentian slightly spun the ancient halberd in his hands. The moon blades attached at the sides of the tip of the halberd actually directly locked down Orchon's spear. After which, Qin Wentian flung the ancient halberd away from him, choosing to deprive both of them of their weapons as he executed the Garuda Movement Technique, dashing straight at Orchon.

“KILL.” Qin Wentian roared, as he spat out a ray of sword light. Orchon's countenance froze, and he hurriedly sent out both his palms in a response, disintegrating that ray of sword light.

Rumble! The terrifying mountain-type Divine Energy surged as Qin Wentian retaliated with his Falling Mountain Palms. Orchon stiffened; his close combat proficiency was unable to be compared to Qin Wentian, but since he had been deprived of his weapon, he had no choice but to meet Qin Wentian palm for palm.

Boom! Orchon only felt his arms shuddering from the impact. Qin Wentian continuously spat out rays of sword light, while Orchon retreated unceasingly, wanting to increase the distance between them. But, how could Qin Wentian give him the chance? Qin Wentian stabbed forth with his finger. A mysterious energy was seemingly contained within that finger attack of his, and it actually caused Orchon to enter a trance-like state.

That finger attack was like the combination strike of both an exceedingly sharp sword and an ancient halberd, wanting to break apart everything.

“Orchon, retreat.” A throaty voice called out. Orchon froze before he explosively retreated. But despite of this, Qin Wentian’s finger attack still landed on his palms, penetrating through, causing fresh blood to leak unceasingly out of the wound.

Boom! Qin Wentian’s left palm smashed forward as a hopeless expression appeared on Orchon’s face. His palm strike landed on Orchon’s body, causing his internal organs to vibrate immensely from the impact that catapulted him through the air.

Qin Wentian had no intentions to spare him. With his body rising in the air, he soared in Orchon’s direction.

“I CONCEDE.” Orchon howled in anger. Qin Wentian was too late; he didn’t managed to finish Orchon before the admission of defeat. He landed gracefully on the platform while Orchon smashed into the ground.

For this round, Qin Wentian was the victor.

Orchon picked himself up as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, his countenance extremely ugly to behold. He actually lost to Qin Wentian.

Raising his head, he watched as Qin Wentian moved to the boundary of the platform, gazing downwards at him. This scenario caused Orchon to turn pale white, as he only felt boundless humiliation washing all over him.

Qin Wentian, this ant-like existence, was actually looking at him with such disdain in his eyes.

“A year ago, you sat atop your war horse and pointed your long spear directly at me, someone undertaking the Emperor Star Academy’s selection examination. At that time, the disparity between you and me was akin to a gulf the size of an entire Astral River.” Qin Wentian calmly continued, “And now after a year has passed, I, a cultivator at the Body Refinement Realm, actually defeated the current you. Orchon, tell me, do you feel shame when people call you a genius?”

It was as though Orchon’s countenance was painted red by blood. With a ‘wa’ sound, he spat out another mouthful of fresh blood.

Obviously, Qin Wentian was intentionally provoking and humiliating Orchon.

“If I were you, I wouldn’t have the face to talk about cultivation anymore. Qin Wentian turned and departed.

In the Chu Emperor District, the swamps of spectators all felt their hearts trembling from personally witnessing variables after variables.

Initially, they thought that Chu Chen was already the biggest variable, slaughtering his way up into the ranks of the top three. But who would have thought that Qin Wentian would appear? After defeating Orchon, he gained the rights to contend for the top

three positions.

From being absent to starting at the last place, all the way until now, where he was contending for the top three.

Even so, Qin Wentian's path should have already reached its end, right?

Currently, the three contestants in front of Qin Wentian, were akin to three insurmountable mountains.

Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue and Chu Chen.

The three of them, similar to Qin Wentian, had already proven their strength.

"I can give you two hours for you to rest." The aged figure spoke to Qin Wentian.

"Senior, who will I battle against next?" Qin Wentian inquired.

"Chu Chen defeated Orchon before you, advancing to the top three. If you want to enter the top three, you will fight against him first." The aged figure replied.

The spectators all nodded their heads in agreement. This arrangement made sense. Although Luo Qianqiu and the other two had not undergone their final ranking battle, Chu Chen did indeed

advance by defeating Orchon. It was only logical to find out who would the victor be between Qin Wentian and Chu Chen before proceeding on with the final ranking battles.

“Then there’s no need to rest.” Qin Wentian serenely replied, causing the gazes directed towards him to be filled with fascination.

How arrogant, he actually said that he didn’t need to take a break?

His next battle would be against the double augmentation effect of the Amethyst Astral Soul together with the Emperor Bloodline limit.

“Since this is the case, Chu Chen, you will fight against Qin Wentian.”

As Chu Chen came face to face with Qin Wentian, the hearts of many spectators were palpitating wildly.

If Qin Wentian won this battle, it would mean that he would be ranked among the top three.

One had to remember that previously, the payout rate for Qin Wentian for entering the top three was 1:100, which was changed to 1:80 earlier. Although only a small amount of people would bet on him, there would still be some who wanted to test their luck. Fan Le was a very good example. If Qin Wentian really won the

match against Chu Chen, the amount of riches that group of minority would win was easily imaginable.

“BOSS, DO YOUR BEST!!” Fatty shouted with gusto as his face was filled with the redness of excitement. Many in the crowd shot him weird looks.

Fan Le calmed down. Only now did he realised that his actions had been too high-profile.

However, Fatty was extremely agitated. If Qin Wentian really won, he would have over thousands and thousands of 2nd-layer Yuan Meteor Stones. He was already dreaming of the beautiful future.

“Come on, let’s start.” There were still a few others who bet on Qin Wentian just to test their luck, but they didn’t really expect that Qin Wentian would actually reach this point. At this moment, they were all filled with boundless anticipation.

Their blood had already started to boil. It seems that they were even more agitated than Qin Wentian himself.

Mo Qingcheng had a nervous expression on her face. Qin Wentian was going to start contending for the positions of the top three rankers.

“It’s not so easy.” The Mo Clansmen sighed. Someone with a cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation actually

reached this point.

But it was still too difficult if he wanted to surpass Chu Chen.

In the direction of the Divine Weapon Pavilion, a beautiful glow could be seen flickering in the eyes of An Liu Yan. She spoke to Yang Chen, “This little fellow is full of unexpected surprises.”

“Indeed, his talent in cultivation doesn’t seem to be any weaker when compared to his talent in inscriptions. He’s really a genius that’s even hard to come by in a hundred years.” Yang Chen nodded in agreement.

And over at the area of the Emperor Star Academy, Mustang, Ren Qianxing, and old man Gu was also extremely agitated.

In the direction of Star River Association, Zuo Yin had a heavy expression on his countenance, as he exclaimed unhappily. “Murin ah.. Murin, you are really a ‘genius’.”

Murin’s countenance was extremely ugly to behold. He had never expected that Qin Wentian would undergo such a transformation. This was undoubtedly smacking his face.

The representatives from the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan were also showing expressions of dissatisfaction on their faces. The ant-like existence that they had never placed in high regards before has already become so outstanding.

Chu Chen stood opposite to Qin Wentian, as he calmly stated, “It’s indeed difficult for you to be able to reach such a step today. You should quit now and bask yourself in the glories of your current achievement.”

Obviously, Chu Chen didn’t think that Qin Wentian could be his opponent.

“You are the same as Orchon, unable to block my path.” Qin Wentian serenely stated as he stared at Chu Chen. His determination, would never be wavered.

Not only that, the current him no longer possessed solely determination.

“Is that so? I hope your strength is comparable to the force of your words.” Chu Chen unleashed both his Astral Souls as a terrifying presence gushed forth. His Bloodline Limit, was also seething relentlessly.

Since he had already obtained one of the top three rankings, how could he still lose it?

He still wanted to measure himself against Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.

As the terrifying presence manifested a storm of pressure, Qin Wentian seemed as though he wasn’t affected by it. He clutched the ancient halberd in his hands and stared calmly at Chu Chen.

“Make your move.” Chu Chen stated.

Qin Wentian nodded. He then transformed into a blur of shadows, executing the first stance of the Great Dream Halbard Art, Mountain Splitter. Breaking the void apart in an instant, he appeared in front of Chu Chen.

Chu Chen roared in anger, as tens of millions of palm shadows were born. The millions of palm shadows integrated into one terrifying gigantic palm, smashing towards the ancient halberd.

Boom, boom, boom! A tremendous tremor was created as Qin Wentian was forced backwards by the impact. Despite this, he once again walked forwards, unleashing yet another attack with his halberd.

This strike of his didn't seemed as ferocious as before, but in the instant that he attacked, it was as though star light appeared. Not only that, visible runic lines interweaved in the air, forming a revolving pathway that transformed into a spiralling black hole, capable of devouring everything.

“Scram!” Chu Chen roared. The terrifying, gigantic palm covered the Heavens and Earth, smashing towards Qin Wentian.

Meanwhile, the second stance of Qin Wentian's Great Dream Halberd Art, Fallen Star, exploded forth.

Boom! A thunderous sound blasted into the eardrums of the spectators as the gigantic palm and the halberd strike collided. After which, a crack could be seen on the surface of the palm before it completely disintegrated into nothingness.

“Ho..how is this possible?” An expression of immense shock was apparent on Chu Chen’s face. Then, he saw Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd smashing his way again. The first stance, Mountain Splitter, moved with a speed as fast as lightning, eradicating everything in it’s path and directly landing right before Chu Chen’s throat.

“I’ve said it before: you are unable to block my path.” Qin Wentian retracted the ancient halberd as he blasted Chu Chen down the platform using a palm strike powered by the Mountain-type Divine Energy, sparing his life.

The serene arrogance of Qin Wentian’s words resounded in the air.

Chu Chen had also been unable to block his path.

After this battle, Qin Wentian finally stepped into top three rankings!

AGM 139 – Golden-Corona Astral Souls

Top three!

Qin Wentian crushed Orchon and Chu Chen and had advanced to one of the top three positions.

At this moment, countless gazes were riveted on him. The youth whom people called a genius wanted to let everyone remember him.

Nobody had forgotten his previous announcement. He was Qin Wentian of Sky Harmony City, son of Qin Chuan.

“How handsome.” Fatty looked up at the Heavens as he closed his eyes and drew in a deep breath, exhibiting an expression of intense enjoyment. From now onwards, his wealth would enable him to show off. Even if it was courting girls, it would also be much easier. The feeling of being rich was just too marvellous!

“MY BET F*CKING PAID OFF.” Another voice hysterically screamed from within the crowd. Qin Wentian being one of the top three rankers, such an improbable thing actually became reality.

“I struck it rich this time around.” The young man beside Immortal Drunken Wine had a radiant smile on his face. Previously, he had bet 100 stones on Qin Wentian obtaining one of the top three position. Now that it became a reality, and according to the previous payout rates, he would earn a total of 10,000 Yuan Meteor Stones.

“I can hear Heaven’s Wonder crying.” Immortal Drunken Wine laughed.

“Why would they be crying? Look at the number of people gambling, and take note that only an extremely few number of people bet on Qin Wentian. I think that Heaven’s Wonder made a killing instead.” The young man smiled as he continued, “Compared to them, my earnings could only be considered peanuts.”

“Starting from today, Qin Wentian, you’ve created a miracle in the Chu Country. In all of the Jun Lin Banquet ever hosted, there had never been someone who obtained one of the top three rankings with merely a cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation. You are the first.” In the direction of Mo Clan, Mo Qingcheng’s father, Mo Tianlin smiled as he spoke, causing many to be startled.

There was no mistake. Today, Qin Wentian had created an unprecedented miracle for the first time in the history of Chu.

Qin Wentian gazed over in the direction and spotted Mo Qingcheng, who was beside her father, making ghost faces at him. Instantly, he had an inkling of who Mo Tianling was, and he replied, “Thanks for your praise, Senior.”

“Work hard. Since you can have this level of attainment today, you will surely become a legend of Chu in the future.” Mo Tianlin

smiled at Qin Wentian, causing many in the crowd to start fantasizing. A legend of Chu, was Mo Tianlin referring to a character like his father? A person who was said to be the strongest under the Heavenly Dipper Realm?

Mo Tianlin's attitude also created great waves in the hearts of many other clans. He was openly showing good will towards Qin Wentian.

“Indeed, this feat of his is almost impossible to achieve.” An Liuyan of the Divine Weapon Pavilion laughed, causing the spectators to shift their gaze over in their direction. The Divine Weapon Pavilion had never once attended the Jun Lin Banquet, but to think they actually came this time around. Most likely, they were here to show their support for the young genius Grandmaster, Qin Wentian.

“Haha, a legendary youth not even 17 years of age actually created such a miracle. How dazzling would his future be? Perhaps we should carve his sculpture and placed it in front of the Emperor Star Monuments?” In the direction of Emperor Star Academy, old Gu laughed out loud, giving Qin Wentian an extremely high evaluation. It also seemed that he was intentionally trying to dissolve Luo Qianqiu's influence.

“A sculpture in front of the Emperor Star Monuments?” Many people gasped in awe. Did Qin Wentian really had such a potential? In any case, from the time they were young, all legends also grew and matured step by step. Would they have the chance to witness the birth of a legend?

However, there were some who were happy about it, and others who were unhappy.

Especially those from the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan, all of whom had a heavy expression on their faces as though they were regretting the fact that they didn't place enough importance on Qin Wentian and failed to kill him before his talent blossomed.

Ye Zhan's countenance went ash-green. Back then, Qin Wentian could not even be compared to him, but now they were already two people belonging to different worlds.

Especially the fact that he would always disdain Qin Wentian in front of Liu Yan. It seems that his words were all coming back to smack him right in the face.

"It's the end of the road for him. He can't possibly advance any further." Ye Zhan whispered in a low voice. But even so, he knew that for Qin Wentian to be able to reach this stage was already something many others could not do.

Liu Yan, who was beside him, gazed at Qin Wentian on the platform before bowing her head in silence.

There was also one in the crowd who had the same complicated feelings as Liu Yan. This person was none other than Autumn Snow. Looking at the proud silhouette standing on the platform, how could one ever imagined that this person was once the trash of Sky Harmony City? Autumn Snow could still vividly remember the sun-like smile Qin Wentian used to show her. Although he couldn't

cultivate, he had always been cheerful, using running as a method to temper his body, persevering onwards with unflagging efforts.

Although only the short span of a year had passed, to Autumn Snow, her current mental state was completely different compared to that a year ago.

It was as though each day had been agonisingly slow for her this year.

Since Qin Wentian was now one of the top three, this meant that he already had the qualifications to challenge Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.

Sikong Mingyue had a wide smile on his face as he looked at Qin Wentian. He was extremely happy. He was initially worried that Qin Wentian wouldn't be able to stand before him. Since Qin Wentian managed to do it, however, he would have no other excuse to avoid the battle with him. How could he not be happy?

2nd Sword and 3rd Night wouldn't die in vain. The shame of Snowcloud...he would wash the slate clean with his own hands!

"I will give you four hours to rest." The aged figure spoke, causing the hearts of the spectators to be filled with an unbearable itch. However, they also understood the logic behind it. After all, Qin Wentian had fought continuously, the Astral Energy within his body should have already been depleted. Naturally, he would need some time to recuperate before entering the battle in optimal condition.

“Go, let’s go to Drunken Wonder to look at the new payout rates.” The crowd soon left one after another, rushing to Drunken Wonder.

After arriving at Drunken Wonder, they immediately rushed to find out what the new payout rates were for the individuals contending for the number one position.

Luo Qianqiu’s adjusted payout rate was 3:4. Sikong Mingyue’s was 1:3, while Qin Wentian’s was 1:10. Although it was much lower compared to the past, it was also clearly obvious that Heaven’s Wonder still favoured Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.

Naturally, these weren’t the only payout rates computed for the upcoming battle.

Just like the other battles, the three of them would have a total of three rounds of battle. Luo Qianqiu versus Sikong Mingyue, Luo Qianqiu versus Qin Wentian, Qin Wentian versus Sikong Mingyue. But if Luo Qianqiu defeating Sikong Mingyue and Sikong Mingyue defeating Qin Wentian, there would no longer a need for the third battle. It seemed obvious that Qin Wentian would lose as well if he were to fight with Luo Qianqiu.

Since the payout rate for Qin Wentian was this high, there were even people considering whether should they test their luck and bet on Qin Wentian.

And thus, there were many who started betting in a particular way. Three stones on Luo Qianqiu, one stone on Qin Wentian. If

Luo Qianqiu won, they wouldn't lose anything. But if Qin Wentian won, they would have struck it rich. But for this case, there was another scenario. They would lose big time if the winner was Sikong Mingyue instead.

And there would also be people thinking that this method of betting was total crap because Qin Wentian would definitely never become the champion. If Luo Qianqiu won, they would earn nothing, and if Sikong Mingyue won, they would lose everything. This method of betting was too stupid, why not just bet all on Luo Qianqiu instead?

Fan Le, that fatty, didn't continued betting. After all, he had already made so much; there was no need for him to take another risk.

The four hours of time would soon pass. On the arena, Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, and Qin Wentian was seated in three different platforms respectively.

Qin Wentian clutched Yuan Meteor Stones in his hands as he quietly cultivated. In this span of four hours, he got increasingly familiar with the 2nd Stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art, Fallen Star, to the point where the might contained within was similar to that level of strength in his dream.

And at this very moment, Sikong Mingyue, who was sitting down cross-leggedly, abruptly opened his eyes as a terrifying killing intent manifested into a ray of light, shooting frenziedly towards Qin Wentian. That pressure seemed as though it wanted to devour Qin Wentian alive.

Qin Wentian opened his eyes and stared at Sikong Mingyue before casting a glance towards Luo Qianqiu.

Regardless of whether it was Luo Qianqiu or Sikong Mingyue, both of them wanted him to die. No matter whom he fought against, the battles would surely be exceptionally intense.

“The first battle, Luo Qianqiu versus Sikong Mingyue,” At this moment, a voice rang out. The entire crowd of audience went silent as their gazes were riveted onto the two named silhouettes on the platform.

The aged figure actually didn't select Qin Wentian for the first ranking battle, but Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue instead.

“The ranking between the first and second position?”

“This battle should be the pinnacle climax of all battles held in the Jun Lin Banquet, right?”

Many speculated in their hearts. Meanwhile, Sikong Mingyue walked up the first platform, standing right in front of Luo Qianqiu.

Both of them bowed slightly to each other, indicating their respect for each other's strength. However, at the same instant, both of their Astral Souls manifested in a shower of dazzling light.

The moment when their Astral Souls were released, countless

gasps could be heard from the spectators.

The two of them released both of their Astral Souls. And around their Astral Souls, a corona of golden light could actually be seen, exceedingly dazzling. This indicated that their Astral Souls hailed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer at the very least.

“Although Luo Qianqiu enrolled in the Emperor Star Academy for a year, he has never released his Astral Souls before. It wasn’t because he wanted to keep a low-profile, but rather that he has never met a worthy opponent who would force him to do so. Now, however, he finally met someone he deemed worthy enough.”

The hearts of the crowd were shuddering, Luo Qianqiu’s Astral Souls were the Lightning Revenant Astral Soul as well as an Arm-type Astral Soul

Both of Sikong Mingyue’s Astral Souls also originated from the 3rd Heavenly Layer – he actually had a [Seven Slaughters Astral Soul](#) and a Sword-type Astral Soul. Sikong Mingyue actually had a Sword-type Astral Soul!

Such high-grade Astral Souls! Taking into account the combinations, their Astral Souls would undoubtedly grant them terrifying attack power. It was no wonder that none of the other cultivators could stand against them. After all, for those with the same level of cultivation, victory depended on the strength of their Astral Souls. The purer the Astral Energy was, the strongest their attacks would be.

TN Note:

七杀星魂 (Seven Slaughters Astral Soul), 七杀 Seven Kills/ Seven Slaughters or Qi Sha

The Qi Sha symbolizes an independent individual, rebellious, straight-forward and brave. He is a warrior that leads his followers to fight and overcome the greatest obstacles. His pure guts and tenacity spurs him to overcome all hurdles and stumbling blocks. He cannot work with others due to his aggressive and dominant character. He would challenge his superiors or bosses if he thinks their ideas are flawed

AGM 140 – Versus Sikong Mingyue

Qin Wentian paid close attention to the battle between Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue. As he gazed at their Astral Souls, he recalled the combat prowess of both of his opponents-to-be. Luo Qianqiu was able to execute palms of thunder, incomparably dominating. It was obvious that he was able to infuse the power of his Astral Soul within his attacks.

Sikong Mingyue was the same as well; that ancient slaughter word imprint of his had a terrifying sharpness to it because he infused it with the properties of his Sword-type Astral Soul, which caused his attacks to be so tyrannical, leaving others unable to defend.

Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue were both extremely familiar with the various ways to execute their powers.

After all, Sikong Mingyue was one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud and would naturally have an experienced expert guiding him. And as for Luo Qianqiu, his origins were from the Nine Mystical Palace. There was no need to explain further as well.

At this moment, Luo Qianqiu was already clashing with Sikong Mingyue.

An illusory Lightning Revenant stood behind Luo Qianqiu. He walked forwards slowly as the arms of the Lightning Revenant frenziedly blasted forwards with thunderous pressure, intending to force Sikong Mingyue into close-combat. However, the power of

Sikong Mingyue's ancient slaughter word imprints was also incredible. He successfully lengthened the distance between them. Not only were the word imprints filled with a terrifyingly sharp aura, there was also a sense of destruction contained within.

With such power, one could well imagine the consequences of being struck by it. Death was guaranteed.

“What ferocious attacks! No wonder they were the two strongest with the highest chance of obtaining the championship. The might of their attacks wasn't something that the others would be able to defend against. Seems like the payout rates set by Heaven's Wonder were not computed blindly,” the spectators thought.

The attacks executed by Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue only got increasingly ferocious as the fight continued on. And at the end, various types of godly innate techniques all erupted forth as the platform transformed into a region filled with thunder and lightning amidst a storm of killing intent, giving people the sense that the apocalypse was here. The spectators closest to them all retreated several steps away. It was as though you would be killed by aftershocks simply by being near them.

“How overwhelming!” many people exclaimed; this was indeed a battle for the first and second position. They are all too powerful to the point where they were levels apart from the other contestants.

“Luo Qianqiu's innate technique seemed slightly more powerful. If this drags on, he will surely be the one to obtain victory.” Many people were conjecturing.

As the sound of an explosion rang out, the terrifying aura of destruction tore the void apart, forcing the two contestants to separate. Even their clothings were torn and tattered as they emerged from the typhoon of destruction.

However, reckless smiles could be seen on both of their faces.

“Satisfying! To be defeated in your hands, I have nothing to say. You are indeed worthy of being the Jun Lin Banquet’s champion.” Sikong Mingyue laughed, with no hint of reluctance clouding his voice.

After all, with his aptitude, he would go to the Nine Mystical Palace sooner or later. He wouldn’t mind making a friend before going there. He naturally also knew of Luo Qianqiu’s status within the Nine Mystical Palace.

“You are also very powerful, but I would have to trouble you to accept the position of the 2nd ranker.” Luo Qianqiu laughed. He was also exceptionally impressed by Sikong Mingyue’s strength. Were it not for his mission to step onto the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he would not have participated in the Jun Lin Banquet. If that was the case, there shouldn’t be any cultivators from the Arterial Circulation realm able to stand against Sikong Mingyue.

“With you here, the position of the 2nd ranker doesn’t matter as well.” Sikong Mingyue laughed. It was as though their rankings had already been set in stone.

The spectators sighed. The payout rates computed by Heaven's Wonder weren't wrong at all. With the lowest payout rate, Luo Qianqiu had the greatest probability of becoming the champion, while Sikong Mingyue ranked second. The only variable was Qin Wentian slaughtering his way up to the top three positions.

After witnessing the strength of Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, no one believed that Qin Wentian had the power to surpass them. This was something utterly impossible.

Qin Wentian, who was seated on the third towering platform, had a weird expression on his face as he heard the conversation between Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.

Luo Qianqiu was the champion while Sikong Mingyue was second?

Then what about him?

He had not even fought yet! And yet, the two of them already seemingly thought that the rankings were already set in stone, as though the Jun Lin Banquet had already concluded.

“Are you guys treating me like the thin air?”

Qin Wentian's faint voice sounded out, causing the eyes of several spectators shifted onto him. Only now did they realise that it seemed as though Qin Wentian also wanted to contend for the

championship.

However, the conversation between Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue did indeed show that they completely ignored the existence of Qin Wentian, treating him as transparent air.

Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue, who were currently conversing, suddenly frowned. It was as though their good mood had been spoiled by Qin Wentian.

Luo Qianqiu stared at Qin Wentian. In the past, despite the fact that Qin Wentian could block three of his strikes, he had never regarded Qin Wentian very highly. And as for now, he naturally still would not put Qin Wentian in his eyes.

After all, he was Luo Qianqiu.

“Back then in the academy, were it not for someone beseeching me to show you mercy, I would have already killed you. And back then during that snowstorm, you had good luck, using your puny tricks to block three of my attacks. In addition to that time in the Dark Forest, you have already escaped death three times. To think that today, you actually still dared to stand in front of me? Do you perhaps think that I’m unable to kill you?”

Luo Qianqiu stared at Qin Wentian. So what if Qin Wentian was talented? So what if he had the position of the third ranker? To him, there was no difference between someone ranked third and someone ranked tenth!

“This is where you are wrong.” Qin Wentian calmly replied.

Luo Qianqiu froze slightly as he laughed, “What an ignorant fellow. Is there even right and wrong in this world?”

“Naturally there is. I think you shouldn’t have forgotten that on that day in the Dark Forest, when you sought to kill me with your followers. At that time, I utilized the power of a Divine Weapon and slaughtered your followers while you stood by the side, not daring to get near. Do you still remember?” Qin Wentian serenely continued.

“You actually felt proud of the fact that you used the might of a Divine Weapon?” Luo Qianqiu disdainfully countered.

“That day back in the academy, how much higher was your cultivation base compared to mine? How easily were you able to kill me? Were you not also proud of that fact as well?” Qin Wentian coldly laughed as he continued, “Think about it carefully. Since I had the Divine Weapon with me during the Dark Forest, what makes you think that I didn’t have that back when I was in the academy? If back then you really made a move intending to kill me, who do you think would have been the one to die that day?”

Qin Wentian’s words caused Luo Qianqiu’s countenance to stiffen. A glint of extreme cold light radiated from his eyes.

“No questions about it, you would have died like a dog. So tell me, what rights do you have to still act so haughty in front of me?” Qin Wentian sarcastically remarked, causing Luo Qianqiu to snort

coldly. The incident that day had been witnessed by many others in the academy, and not only that, there were also rumors spreading. Qin Wentian wanted to shame him in front of the numerous spectators by bringing this incident out in the public.

If Lin Hua didn't beseeched him to show mercy to Qin Wentian that day, he would have been the one to die instead.

"And as for that day of the snowstorm, we had a prior agreement. I only had to block three of your attacks. I did so, but you actually struck out a fourth time. You were unable to use your strength to prove your pride, and yet you actually want to use this event to mock me? Perhaps you felt proud of your own shameless actions." Qin Wentian spoke again, but Luo Qianqiu didn't continue speaking. His countenance was as cold as ice.

"What a sharp-tongued brat. However, what purpose does it serve? Ultimately, power still speaks the loudest," Luo Qianqiu sarcastically shot back.

Qin Wentian slowly stood up, closing his eyes as he drew in a deep breath. After which, his eyes snapped open. His gaze sharpened many times, akin to the sharpness of an unsheathed, incredibly sharp sword.

He had already made his preparations to fight the last two battles.

"You are absolutely right. Ultimately, power speaks the loudest." Qin Wentian agreed. In front of true power, all words and

strategies were useless.

“Come, let’s fight.”

Qin Wentian’s gentle voice sounded out. The volume of his voice wasn’t loud, but it was as though it had a strange power to it. Contained within it was a hint of an aura that could ascend the Heavens, as well as an unshakable heart.

At this moment, Qin Wentian stood there, directly facing two strongest elites in the Jun Lin Banquet. If he wanted to advance, he had to defeat them.

“Sikong Mingyue versus Qin Wentian.”

At this moment, the voice of the aged figure drifted over. A storm was beginning to brew in the middle of the air.

The fascinating battle between Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue just ended. Would Qin Wentian be able to present a battle of a similar level?

For this battle, he would fight against Sikong Mingyue. If he lost, he would no longer have the qualifications to challenge Luo Qianqiu.

“Since you want to die so much, i will aid you by letting everyone know that your existence has no value in this world,” Sikong Mingyue spat out.

Qin Wentian didn't say anything. He merely raised his ancient halberd and pointed it straight at Sikong Mingyue. His intent was obvious even without words.

Sikong Mingyue stepped on the third platform as he slowly made his way towards Qin Wentian.

With each step he took, the bloodlust he emitted intensified.

“Indeed, the ignorant are fearless.”

Sikong Mingyue had already released both of his Astral Souls. They shone with a golden radiance as he bathed in the Astral Light. A terrible energy of destruction that originated from the Seven Slaughters Astral Soul gushed out in waves.

Qin Wentian also released both of his Astral Souls. But wait.. why did his Astral Souls seem even more resplendent compared to Sikong Mingyue's? He was the only one in the entire Jun Lin Banquet who had an advantage in the grade and quality of Astral Souls compared to them but what a pity! Considering his current cultivation base, he was destined to be unable to surpass them.

“Die!” Sikong Mingyue's palm wavered as he sent out the ancient slaughter word imprints, the pressure they generated smashing towards Qin Wentian.

The ancient halberd lacerated the void, slamming into the word

imprint as the word imprint shattered into pieces. But just the power contained within a single word imprint was sufficient enough to cause his arms to tremble. One could see how powerful the might contained within it truly was.

Sikong Mingyue ruthlessly leaped up the air, his killing intent billowing. Numerous ancient slaughter word imprints manifested, as they all zoomed towards Qin Wentian. The tremendous pressure they exuded was so intense that it seemed as though they wanted to devour Qin Wentian, slaughtering him from where he stood.

“How merciless! Obviously he wanted to kill Qin Wentian in order to avenge 2nd Sword and 3rd Night.”

Many people were silently speculating in their hearts. Would Qin Wentian, a genius who has just risen, fall during this Jun Lin Banquet?

AGM 141 – Pointing The Halberd At Luo Qianqiu

Qin Wentian weaved the ancient halberd in his hands in a perfect dance, powered by the Mountain-type Divine Energy as a faint shadow of a Xuan Wu Black Tortoise manifested, its defense as sturdy as a mountain. Despite the sharpness of the ancient slaughter word imprints, they could not penetrate Qin Wentian's defense.

“Hmph.” Sikong Mingyue coldly snorted as he strode forwards, arriving in front of Qin Wentian. Extending his palms, an innumerable amount of the ancient slaughter word imprints formed as they amalgamated into the form of a monstrosly sharp sword that seemed to solely exist for the sake of killing. As it stabbed forwards, cracks appeared on the illusory Xuan Wu Turtle as Qin Wentian retreated several steps.

A light wind fluttered Sikong Mingyue's long hair. How awe-inspiring he looked! He and Qin Wentian were existences belonging to two different worlds. Today, Qin Wentian would die under his hands; he would absolutely not show mercy.

“Treating you like the thin air? What about it? Since you want to court death, I shall help you.”

Sikong Mingyue slowly continued walking forwards as the area around him burst with a storm of killing intent. His whole being was akin to a god of slaughter. No matter who was it that blocked his path, he would kill with no questions asked.

Qin Wentian closed his eyes as he drew in a deep breath. His actions left the crowd dumbfounded. Closing his eyes at this very moment? Has he already resigned himself to his death?

The crowd didn't understand. Countless gazes from various spectators were riveted onto Qin Wentian. There were some who were worried, and others who couldn't wait for Qin Wentian to die.

However, at this very moment, a terrifying aura emanated forth from Qin Wentian's body. The blood within his body started to seeth.

His long hair fluttered about in the wind, as the colour of it seemingly darkened into a hue of black that's blacker than black. At this moment, it was as though the crowd was under an illusion. It seemed to them that Qin Wentian, was actually undergoing a transformation in this very instant.

And as for Sikong Mingyue, who stood in front of Qin Wentian, this feeling was extremely obvious. The storm of killing intent seemed to slow as he frowned and furrowed his brows. Was this a Bloodline Limit?

The power of bloodline Qin Wentian possessed was currently being awakened.

Qin Wentian's frame seemed to grow sturdier and larger in an instant. The aura of an ancient desolate beast emanated from him, as though he was the ruler of Heavens and Earth.

Buzz! Abruptly, Qin Wentian's eyes snapped open. In that instant, the aura of a Godly Monarch gushed forth, demanding absolute obedience from all things under the Heavens, causing Sikong Mingyue to involuntarily tremble.

And amidst the crackling and rattling sounds, the body of Qin Wentian expanded in height and girth. He stood there like a Monarch, an Ancient God, looking down on this pitiful world from the Heavens above.

Qin Wentian's body was filled with an inexhaustible strength. His grip was like steel as he held the ancient halberd, pointing it at Sikong Mingyue.

“What a terrifying Bloodline Limit. It's like the body of the host underwent a reconstruction. Such a Bloodline Limit would definitely be ranked extremely highly.” Some of the more powerful spectators in the crowd could still feel their hearts shuddering from what they'd witnessed. Although Bloodline Limits were extremely rare, they still knew what a Bloodline Limit was and the grades in which the Bloodline Limits could be categorized into.

Qin Wentian's Bloodline Limit not only augment his strength; it also generated an aura of absolute obedience. This was something that only high-ranked Bloodline Limits would have.

“The advantage you both shared is merely that of a higher cultivation base. I truly don't understand why do both of you still have that expression of disgusting arrogance stuck on your faces.

It's as though only the two of you exist under the Heavens." Qin Wentian calmly continued, "Sometimes, a higher cultivation base doesn't represent anything. When I, at only the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, defeat you both, I want to see how ugly you will look after I crush your arrogance."

As he spoke, Qin Wentian took a step forwards, it was as though he was truly the ruler of the world!

On the platform, a gentle wind gusted. Countless gazes were fixed onto Qin Wentian. At this moment, almost everyone was paying attention to him.

"With so many eyes on me, how can I still disappoint them?"

Drawing in a deep breath, Qin Wentian's battle intent surged to its utmost limit.

Once, he was just a nobody, stepping into the Royal Capital in the face of so many risks and dangers.

Back then, so long as the Ye Clan slightly regarded him more importantly, he might have already become a dead man. But even with the low level of regard they had for him, he had almost died in the hands of Orfon and Ye Zhan.

At that time, he was all alone, with no friends, with nobody paying any attention to him. But now, although he made many enemies, he also knew that there were several people who only

wanted the best for him.

Mo Clan, Divine Weapon Pavilion, Emperor Star Academy, Mo Qingcheng, Mu Rou, that fatty Fan Le... So many people's hopes were all on his shoulders, so how could he let them down?

From the moment he stepped on the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, he wanted to contend for the number one position. And now, his confidence in his abilities was many times that of before. The champion of this Jun Lin Banquet would definitely be him.

Inside him, his blood was boiling as his Divine Energy surged, smoothly flowing through the Stellar Meridians as it exploded out from his palms. His aura was still continuously rising, seemingly with no intentions to stop.

Sikong Mingyue finally moved. He initially wanted to see how strong Qin Wentian would be since he dared to challenge him. However, his self-confidence was slowly wavering.

Qin Wentian's aura soared frenziedly upwards, but he rushed to suppress it. If not, it may inversely lead to his body's vitals being damaged due to the pressure it generated.

Boom! Qin Wentian also moved as he transformed into a lightstream, blasting forth with Mountain Splitter. The ancient halberd emanated a sense of peerless terror as though it wanted to smash everything apart.

“KILL.” Sikong Mingyue howled in anger. The giant sword formed from the slaughter imprints slammed directly against the ancient halberd. A terrifying shockwave blasted out, causing Sikong Mingyue to retreat a step backwards. Even though it was only a step, to him, it was a humiliation.

Boom! Yet another halberd strike was unleashed. At this moment, Qin Wentian was like a peerless martial god, his strength towering the Heavens.

Sikong Mingyue grew exceedingly ugly, as the Astral Energy in his body began surging. Lifting his palms, the giant sword broke apart as the numerous ancient slaughter word imprints condensed themselves and formed a towering symbol “杀” that flew forwards to meet the halberd strike.

And as the thunderous sound of a collision rang out, the ancient halberd smashed the “杀” symbol into smithereens. Sikong Mingyue retreated three more steps, his countenance extremely unsightly

“COME!” Sikong Mingyue roared in madness. Despite his retreat, his aura had never weakened. His killing intent grew even stronger, as countless word imprints manifested, floating before his palm, each containing a terrifying Sword Qi within them.

“Die.” Sikong Mingyue blasted his palms forwards. The countless imprints transformed into a blood-colored light, flying towards Qin Wentian with a might that was powerful enough to shake the hearts of the most stalwart.

However,, Qin Wentian simultaneously sent out yet another strike. This time around, he executed Fallen Star.

The spectators seemed as though they were seeing countless constellations transforming into spirals as they frenziedly smashed downwards.

Ultimately, a frightening rumbling sound could be heard as the aftershocks shook the entire platform, which easily broke apart, and devoured the slaughter word imprints. The rest of the constellation spirals flew towards Sikong Mingyue, who hurriedly defended. The impact caused him to vomit blood and madly retreat.

The dull sounds of impact rang out once again, as Sikong Mingyue was forced to retreat to the very boundary of the platform. A large amount of his blood pooled around him.

In the air, there was only silence.

How could Qin Wentian's attacks be this powerful?

They had all personally witnessed the violence and tyranny of Sikong Mingyue's attacks. But how much more powerful must Qin Wentian's attack be in order to smash the slaughter word imprints, even causing Sikong Mingyue to be injured to such an extent?

“The contestants participating in the Jun Lin Banquet have really outdone themselves this year.” Many people remarked. This banquet had been too fascinating.

Initially, they thought Chu Chen was a dark horse, but to think that even before Chu Chen could enjoy the feeling of being part of the top three rankers, he was pulled down from it by Qin Wentian. Not only that, he wasn't even in his strongest state when he defeated Chu Chen.

And currently, Qin Wentian even wanted to suppress Sikong Mingyue underneath him.

“Those overbearing words of yours, now that you think about it, don't you feel ashamed? You, at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, do you have any qualifications to be so arrogant?” Qin Wentian calmly spoke as the aura he exuded still remained as terrifying as ever. His serene voice was akin to a slap directly hitting Sikong Mingyue's face.

“Since you want to die so much, I will aid you by letting everyone know that your existence has no value in this world,”

“Indeed, the ignorant are fearless.”

“Treating you like the thin air? So what of it? Since you want to court death, I shall help you.”

These statements had all been made by Sikong Mingyue not long

ago, but what was the result?

Qin Wentian held the ancient halberd in his grasp as he continued forwards. The countenance of Sikong Mingyue was so unsightly to the point where his face started to contort. Qin Wentian didn't struck out directly but rather walked towards him step by step. Was Qin Wentian trying to make him concede in front of all the spectators?

As the distance between them got increasingly closer, Qin Wentian's killing intent also gradually became stronger. There was no doubt, Qin Wentian would definitely dare to kill Sikong Mingyue.

Before this, he had already slaughtered 2nd Sword and 3rd Night.

As he felt Qin Wentian's ever-strengthening presence, an expression of extreme agony could be seen reflected on Sikong Mingyue's countenance. "I concede."

A simple sentence, yet it seemed to sap Sikong Mingyue of his entire strength. These three words were undoubtedly announcing that he, Sikong Mingyue, was not a match for Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian halted his steps as Sikong Mingyue lowered his head in shame. Sikong Mingyue then turned and jumped off the platform. He had actually lost to Qin Wentian!

The position of the 2nd ranker was stolen away by Qin Wentian.

“F*cking handsome!” Fan Le drew in a deep breath. An expression of mesmerization clouded his features. He was currently losing himself in thoughts of rolling in money. This fellow obtained the 2nd ranking in the Jun Lin Banquet! He was so f*cking handsome that even Fan Le would fall in love with him!

There were many people in the crowd who was still stunned and had yet to recover. Qin Wentian actually stole the position of the 2nd ranker directly from Orchon’s hand?

Not only that, did Qin Wentian intend to stop here?

Only to see his gaze shifting to the first towering platform. He pointed his halberd straight at Luo Qianqiu.

Once, Luo Qianqiu had stood so high up, looking down at him, wanting him to handover the Blood Ember Fruits or suffer death.

Once, Luo Qianqiu pursued him to kill him in the Dark Forest, almost resulting in his death.

Once, in the middle of the snowstorm, Luo Qianqiu wanted him to accept three of his strikes, considering himself to be unequalled throughout the world.

And not long ago, Luo Qianqiu was still as insufferably arrogant, as if he was already the Jun Lin Banquet’s champion.

To him, Qin Wentian had never been worthy enough to be placed in his eyes.

And now, finally, he stood in front of Luo Qianqiu, facing him as an equal.

He wanted to show Luo Qianqiu. What right did Luo Qianqiu have to be so insufferably arrogant?!

“Your turn.” Without any grand, heroic words, Qin Wentian’s two words were spoken as though he was making an announcement.

Today in the Jun Lin Banquet, he, Qin Wentian, wanted to contend for the number one position!

AGM 142 – I Want You To Lose

His hair was as dark as black ink. Blood dyed the ancient halberd red.

Qin Wentian stood there, akin to an ancient war god. Last year's youth no longer existed after the transformation. His battle intent rose without limits, exploding forwards with no reservations.

At this moment, the crowd could sense that Luo Qianqiu was no longer that confident in himself. After personally witnessing Qin Wentian crushing Sikong Mingyue, they could faintly sense that perhaps Qin Wentian did indeed have the power to defeat Luo Qianqiu and contend for the position of the first ranker.

In this instant, they had already forgotten about their bets. Their eyes were filled with intense anticipation for this Heavenly-defying young genius who had just risen, waiting for him to accomplish this final 'twist' of fate. If he was successful, this incident would be a legend that would persist for a thousand years.

Would Qin Wentian truly be able to defeat Luo Qianqiu?

Luo Qianqiu took a step forward in the face of Qin Wentian's ancient halberd. His battle intent similarly soared to the skies.

“Take a break for four hours.”

Just before their two auras collided, the indifferent-sounding

voice belonging to the aged figure standing beside Chu Tianjiao drifted out.

What the f***! This caused the countenances of the spectators to turn dumbfounded, as dissatisfaction and anger was apparent in the air. Since both Qin Wentian and Luo Qianqiu were ready to battle, why would they still need to take a break?

What the hell was going on?

However, no matter how dissatisfied they were, the decision still lied with the aged figure. They had no choice but to wait for those four hours to be up.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows as he shifted his gaze to that aged figure. Why?

“The two of you should rest now so you can fight with all your might later.” The aged figure forcefully continued, leaving Luo Qianqiu and Qin Wentian no choice but to nod their heads. Since the judge had already spoken, there was no choice but to wait it out.

“I’m sure all of you spectators should be tired now. Why not take a rest first and enjoy the show later?” Chu Tianjiao laughed as he addressed the crowd.

Although the spectators were extremely unwilling, they could only smile forcefully as they continued chatting with each other.

Luo Qianqiu left the platform after being seemingly summoned by someone.

“Qin Wentian, do you mind coming over here for a chat?”

At this moment, the sound of a voice drifted out. The gazes of the crowd shifted over, focusing on a person standing next to Chu Tianjiao.

This person was precisely the middle-aged man of few words. The instant he spoke, his words caused the pupils of the crowd to narrow in bewilderment. He wanted Qin Wentian to go over for a chat?

The spectators who had authority and status all knew the origin of this man. As he invited Qin Wentian over, the hearts of many in the crowd, especially those from the Ye and Ou Clan, started palpitating wildly in panic.

Indeed, with Qin Wentian’s talent, he would definitely be noticed in the Jun Lin Banquet. After all, he was the one who defeated Sikong Mingyue.

Even if they had enmity with Qin Wentian, they could not fail to recognize his talent. If they were in the same shoes as the Nine Mystical Palace, they would also want to recruit Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian kept his ancient halberd as his seething blood

gradually grew calm. After his fetters were unsealed, in the face of boundless agony bore by his unshakable determination, he was now currently capable of controlling the power of his Bloodline Limit.

Jumping across the platforms, Qin Wentian appeared in front of the middle-aged man. The youths standing nearby all looked at him with a glint of sharpness in their eyes.

These youths should have also originated from the same place as Luo Qianqiu. Their strength was formidable, without a doubt.

“Let’s go to the back and drink a few cups.” The middle-aged man turned as he led Qin Wentian to the space behind Chu Tianjiao, where there were already banquet tables set up.

After they sat down, attendants poured out cups of wine for them. The middle-aged man raised his cup and smiled, “Amazing talent. Are you interested in joining our Nine Mystical Palace?”

Qin Wentian froze. Indeed, this person was from the Nine Mystical Palace.

The Nine Mystical Palace was the power behind Chu and was thus unoffendable. If he joined the Nine Mystical Palace, it would mean that Qin Wentian’s future path would be smooth and unobstructed

However, the conversation with Mustang earlier caused a barrier

to appear in his heart.

It was as though the Nine Mystical Palace had a vested interest in the Heavenly Star Pavilion of the Emperor Star Academy. If he agreed to join the Nine Mystical Palace, the Nine Mystical Palace would make him stand in opposition to the Emperor Star Academy. This was something that he was unwilling to do.

“Senior, what about the competition of this year’s Jun Lin Banquet?” Qin Wentian inquired. He wanted to be certain that Luo Qianqiu’s mission was to enter the Heavenly Star Pavilion, related to the Nine Mystical Palace.

“I want you to lose.” The middle-aged man laughed as he raised his cup to Qin Wentian, his voice sounding exceptionally calm as though he was talking about something of no importance.

However, Qin Wentian’s pupils narrowed. Looking at how the other party was smiling, he felt a coldness invading his heart.

I want you to lose!

Five simple words, yet the meaning contained within them was very clear. Qin Wentian already had his answer.

Despite the recognition of his talent, the Nine Mystical Palace still wanted Qin Wentian to lose.

“Don’t worry, as long as you are willing to join the Nine Mystical

Palace, what you would obtain in rewards would far surpass what being the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet could bestow on you. You should clearly know what power the Nine Mystical Palace holds. Not only that, I truly admire you for your talent.” The middle-aged man continued smiling, “However, because of some other factors, you, have to lose your next battle. Luo Qianqiu must obtain the first ranking. As for the little misunderstandings between the two of you, I will step in to mediate.”

Qin Wentian went silent, feeling the pressure.

Naturally, he didn't want to concede. The moment he stepped on the stage of Jun Lin Banquet, he had already told himself that he would contend for the top ranking. Even if it was difficult, he would accept it with no regrets. But to think that now, the Nine Mystical Palace actually told him to that they wanted him to lose?

He didn't want to lose, moreover losing intentionally. But the pressure of the Nine Mystical Palace was like a huge mountain pressing down on his back.

“There's still some time, do consider it carefully. What we can give you is something the Emperor Star Academy would never be able to give. Based on your talent, the correct choice is to join my Nine Mystical Palace.” The middle-aged man continued smiling as he departed, leaving Qin Wentian sitting there alone.

Although the smile on the middle age man's countenance never wavered, Qin Wentian understood that nobody knew what malicious thoughts existed underneath that smiling facade.

Finishing the wine in his cup, Qin Wentian also departed from the area.

“Have you thought about it?” The middle-aged man inquired with a smile as Qin Wentian walked past him.

“I will think about it.” Qin Wentian didn’t directly agree or decline before returning to the platform. At this moment, several individuals in the crowd was silently speculating. What did the representatives from the Nine Mystical Palace talk to him about when he was called out earlier?

They should have wanted to recruit Qin Wentian to the Nine Mystical Palace, right? Since that was the case, did Qin Wentian agree to it?

Qin Wentian ignored the stares of the crowd and closed his eyes. Retrieving two Yuan Meteor Stones, he wanted to adjust his body to its optimal condition and soon entered into a state of [Anatta](#).

Buddhist concept of ‘no-self’

Nobody could tell what he was thinking about, and other than Qin Wentian, no one else knew exactly what just transpired.

Time slowly flowed by, and the crowd got increasingly impatient.

Based on the latest payout rate computed by Drunken Wonder,

Luo Qianqiu and Qin Wentian's odds for obtaining the championship was 1:2.

After the new payout rates were out, countless people began to bet on Qin Wentian. They felt that the current Qin Wentian had a higher possibility of becoming the champion. The hopes they had on Qin Wentian was even greater and stronger compared to their belief in Luo Qianqiu.

Luo Qianqiu was born with a golden spoon in his mouth. From the start, he had already been determined to be the strongest contestant. However, Qin Wentian was a dark horse. With a cultivation base at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, he slaughtered his way up here. Such a twist of fate caused many of the spectators' hearts to palpitate with excitement. They wished that they would be like Qin Wentian, slaughtering the ranks one by one all the way until they reached the peak.

One could say that the bets laid on Qin Wentian was no longer purely because of the pursuit of profit, but because of their inner emotions, as well as a type of faith.

They hoped to see something different.

They also hoped that they would witness history being created. If Qin Wentian's name shook the world a thousand years from now, this battle would become a fabled legend.

Four hours passed quickly, but they felt like an eternity to the spectators. It was as though several days had passed before the

aged figure announced the start of the next battle.

At this moment, the entire space was silent as everyone quietly focused their attentions on the two silhouettes who were standing in opposition to each other. The last battle of the Jun Lin Banquet – Luo Qianqiu versus Qin Wentian. Would this battle be recorded in Chu's annals of history?

Arcs of lightning could be seen flashing about Luo Qianqiu's body, who appeared akin to a God of Lightning as he stood there motionless.

Qin Wentian had the ancient halberd in his hands, and his blood started to seeth again. Although his efforts to calm the power of his bloodline earlier left him somewhat exhausted, he still had enough energy for this one last battle.

As the Astral Energy in his body started to flow, at that very moment, Qin Wentian's countenance turned exceptionally unsightly to behold!

"COME!" Luo Qianqiu roared. He swoop down on Qin Wentian, blasting out with his lightning palms. Qin Wentian went ashen as he struck out with his ancient halberd. The power was a far cry from back when he was fighting with Sikong Mingyue.

With a thunderous sound, Qin Wentian's body was flung through the air before slamming onto the ground with a dull thud, spitting out a mouthful of fresh blood.

“This...”

All the spectators were dumbfounded. Qin Wentian actually lost by this much in merely the first exchange? Were the disparity between the two contestants really that great?

Many expressions of dejection and disappointment were apparent on their faces. Did they judge wrongly?

“Why?” Qin Wentian’s eyes were filled with boundless rage as he stared straight at the middle-aged man standing near the Azure Dragon Jade Emperor Seat.

He had only drunk a small cup of wine in these four hours.

At this moment, the Astral Energy in his body was running amok in havoc.

“I want you to lose.” As Qin Wentian thought back to that middle-aged man’s resolute and decisive voice, his heart became submerged with fury and hatred. The Nine Mystical Palace wanted him to lose!

AGM 143 – I AM NOT WILLING!

Qin Wentian gazed in the direction of the middle-aged man, who showed no reactions. It was as though what just happened had nothing to do with him.

Luo Qianqiu, regardless of anything, had to become the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet. They could not afford to have any accidents.

At this moment, everyone was dumbfounded. How could Qin Wentian fall so easily? Was he destined be placed under Luo Qianqiu? The moment when Qin Wentian defeated Luo Qianqiu, the aura he exuded had caused many of the spectators to bet without hesitation on Qin Wentian becoming the victor.

If Qin Wentian were really to fall here, they would have no complains because their decision was made solely because of their anticipations.

But never in their dreams would they have imagined such an ending. Qin Wentian wasn't even able to block a single strike from Luo Qianqiu? This caused the spectators to be somewhat unable to accept this.

Not only the spectators, the people from Emperor Star Academy, the Divine Weapon Pavilion, and the Mo Clan were all stunned. They had a lack of comprehension on their countenance.

Within those who came from the Emperor Star Academy, Ren

Qianxing's eyes flickered as he sighed in his heart. He could somewhat guessed what the Nine Mystical Palace offered to Qin Wentian. They would definitely not allow Luo Qianqiu to be defeated. Since that was the case, they would naturally tempt Qin Wentian into joining them, offering excellent conditions for him to concede the battle.

Based on the power contained within Qin Wentian's halberd strike earlier, there was only a single possibility – he intentionally wanted to concede.

This caused Ren Qianxing to feel terrible in his heart. Luo Qianqiu's father had been his disciple a long time ago. He had placed such tremendous importance on him, but he was nothing but a vicious tyrant, a wolf in sheep's clothings.

Qin Wentian was the second person he had placed such high importance on. If Qin Wentian truly chose to walk the same path as Luo Qianqiu's father, his heart would be broken into infinite pieces.

“Is that all of your strength?” Luo Qianqiu approached Qin Wentian, shrouded in a storm of lightning. At this moment, Luo Qianqiu appeared unparalleled in the world.

Qin Wentian forced his body to stand upright, looking straight at his opponent. His arterial pathways seemed to be somehow sealed, causing the Astral Energy in his body to be unable to circulate freely. In such a state, there was no way he could summon any strength, no way for him to battle.

What made him even more infuriated was that even though the Nine Mystical Palace did such a thing, he could not expose them.

It was very possible that he would inadvertently cause great waves of calamities to descend the moment he revealed what happened.

They were the Nine Mystical Palace, the true controller of Chu! Although he still had not discarded all appearances of cordiality with them, the moment he said that the Nine Mystical Palace drugged him, it would be equivalent to him jumping down a cliff voluntarily.

There was no one who could understand the feelings Qin Wentian was currently going through.

Sorrow, pain, struggle, despair.

Rumble! Luo Qianqiu blasted out with his attack. His lightning and thunder palms of his seemed as though they wanted to bury Qin Wentian right where he stood. Qin Wentian summoned all the Astral Energy he could to defend, and after yet another thunderous sound, his body flew through the air and smashed onto the ground. This time, he went numb as he unceasingly spat out mouthfuls of blood, his countenance utterly devoid of blood.

“Wh..what happened?” Fan Le’s initial relaxed expression had turn into one of anxiety. So what if he had won numerous Yuan Meteor Stones? Seeing Qin Wentian in such a state, he could not feel the slightest bit of joy from it at all.

He wasn't afraid that Qin Wentian would lose, but he didn't want to see this brother of his suffering from such a humiliation.

Luo Huan, Mu Rou, Mo Qingcheng, and Mustang were all stunned. They could not accept what was happening.

“As i expected, how useless.” Among those from the Emperor Star Academy, the sarcastic note in Qiu Mo's voice was exceptionally ear-piercing. Old Gu swept over a look of icy coldness, which caused Qiu Mo to freeze and shut his mouth.

And yet he, felt extremely unwilling in his heart. The recognition and importance placed on Qin Wentian had already surpassed him, who was a Yuanfu Realm student. No matter what, he was still Qiu Mo, a Yuanfu expert who was ranked 4th among Chu's 10 prodigies.

“Qin Wentian.”

At this moment, the sound of a voice drifted into his ears, a voice that only he could hear.

“Just concede, I won't allow Luo Qianqiu to do anything to you. As long as you concede, not only Qianqiu will spare you, I will also compensate you.”

The countenance of the middle-aged man was still as serene as before, with no hints of any disturbance on his face.

“Trying to use this method to force me to concede? If I don’t concede, does that mean that Luo Qianqiu will kill me where I stand?” Qin Wentian raged in his heart. He had reason to believe that if the Nine Mystical Palace lied and if Luo Qianqiu were to kill him, there was no one who would take any actions against Luo Qianqiu.

The Nine Mystical Palace was standing behind Luo Qianqiu alongside the support granted to him by the Royal Clan. Who would dare to touch Luo Qianqiu?

Qin Wentian glanced at the spectators’ stand. He could see Mustang’s expression, the struggle and pain on Ren Qianxing’s face, Mo Qingcheng’s worry, the sadness and anxiety on Luo Huan, Qin Yao and Fatty Fan Le. as well as many expressions of dejection reflected on the faces of the crowd.

For the first time, Qin Wentian sensed the concern that so many people felt for him.

And within these people, there were elders, relatives, acquaintances, and even strangers who merely wanted to support him.

A year ago, he had been alone when he came from the Sky Harmony City, facing danger from all sides.

But today, after seeing so many people showing concern for him, he felt warmth and happiness, a joyfulness that came from deep

within his heart.

But because of this source of joy, he was unwilling to lose just like this. He wasn't willing to let all down those individuals who were concerned about him

He didn't want to see expressions of dejection on their faces. He wasn't willing to be the puppet of the Nine Mystical Palace, dancing to their strings.

If they truly valued his talent, they could have talked nicely to him. However, with all the deeds the Nine Mystical Palace committed, their actions did not reflect respect but rather a form of humiliation.

He wasn't willing to lose in such a way!

“The night is the darkest before dawn.”

Qin Wentian recalled the words Uncle Black once said to him. As he thought of Uncle Black's wrinkled face, he couldn't help but start crying in his heart.

Luo Qianqiu appeared in front of Qin Wentian once again, shrouded within an aura of violence. On him, a surge of terrifying pressure frenziedly emanated forth.

“There will be no more miracles. I want you to die.”

Luo Qianqiu's voice was resolute and decisive. He wanted Qin Wentian to die. This time, he wouldn't give Qin Wentian the slightest chance to survive.

As the terrifying lightning energies gathered within his palm, a storm of wind and thunder raged around Luo Qianqiu. His gaze was riveted onto Qin Wentian, who had his head bowed, similar to how a hunter stared at his prey.

"From this moment onwards, there will no longer be a Qin Wentian in Chu Country." Luo Qianqiu calmly spoke.

"I can't lose here." Qin Wentian abruptly inclined his head, releasing his Great Dream Astral Soul. His eyes seemed to radiate terrifying dream waves as Luo Qianqiu's motions froze in an instant.

Not only Luo Qianqiu, but Qin Wentian also froze. Despite the wind fluttering their hair, their bodies froze in place as though they had transformed into statues.

As the Great Dream Astral Soul displayed its brilliance, many people had bewildered expressions on their faces.

This Astral Soul could hypnotize people into entering sleep.

"They stopped moving?"

“Have they entered a dream?”

Many spectators were astonished. This final ranking battle had undergone a huge change yet again.

Luo Qianqiu did indeed entered Qin Wentian’s dreamscape. Atop a huge expanse of a land of desolation, only the two of them stood there,

At this moment, a dangerous aura was gushing forth from Qin Wentian’s body. In here, he was God. He coldly regarded Luo Qianqiu as the aura from his body grew terrifying to an inconceivable degree.

“An illusion?” Luo Qianqiu frowned and closed his eyes. His strength of will erupted outwards.

He wanted to break out. This was the dreamscape Qin Wentian created and not reality. Regardless of how strong Qin Wentian was in here, it was nothing but an illusion.

“So what about it?” Qin Wentian spoke as he strode forwards. His towering aura completely exploded as he smashed out with his ancient halberd. In that instant, the Qi from Heaven and Earth gathered in a frenzied spiral, transforming into a stream of light.

Although Luo Qianqiu knew this was an illusion, it felt too real, he could only retaliate in defense, hoping to counter. The stream of light pierced into his arms, drawing first blood.

Luo Qianqiu immediately retreated, his countenance extremely ugly to behold.

“Despicable, can you only defeat me in a reality created in your dreams?” Luo Qianqiu sneered.

“Despicable? Before the battle, your Nine Mystical Palace drugged me, causing blockage in my arterial pathways. It left me with no way to battle, which ended up me being sorely suppressed by you. Or do you really think that your strength was that powerful? How ridiculous.” Qin Wentian mocked him. He continued, “Not only that, is creating a dreamscape not part of my strength? How can I be compared to you people of the Nine Mystical Palace? To achieve your aims, you are prepared to use any strategies or methods no matter how underhanded they are.”

Luo Qianqiu furrowed his brows as he replied, “You are lying.”

“Hmph.” Qin Wentian couldn’t be bothered to explain. His terrifying aura exploded forth. This was his dreamscape; regardless of how strong Luo Qianqiu’s will was, there was no way he could get out so easily.

Soon after, Luo Qianqiu’s body was dyed red in blood within the dreamscape. Qin Wentian slowly walked towards him, glancing down at him from a height.

To the people outside, the spectators only saw that both of the contestants were standing there without moving. Correction, Luo

Qianqiu seemed to be retreating step by step, but no one on the outside knew what he was experiencing.

“They seemed to be inside a dreamscape.” A sharp light flickered inside Ren Qianxing’s eyes. Qin Wentian did not concede, nor was he intentionally trying to lose!

He, Ren Qianxing, had not made the wrong judgement!

Since that was the case, could it be that the Nine Mystical Palace did something earlier?

Glancing sharply at the direction of the Nine Mystical Palace, he only saw that the middle-aged man had an expression of something akin to panic.

“NO!” The howl of anger shook the Heavens and Earth as a powerful aura exploded forth from the body of Luo Qianqiu. Regaining his senses, he stared at Qin Wentian, howling in rage, “Regardless how strong you are in your dreamscape, you will still die here today.”

An inexhaustible amount of lightning metamorphosed into dragons and snakes dancing about in the air. Luo Qianqiu’s killing intent surged frenziedly.

“Too late.” Qin Wentian’s blood was also seething. His long hair grew blacker than black, while his body was akin to a monarch, the ruler of all lands under the Heavens.

Sounds of waves crashing could be heard from within Qin Wentian's body. His blood, as well as the Astral Energy in his arterial pathways, seemed to be howling in anger.

“BREAK FOR ME!” Qin Wentian roared, facing the skies as his long hair fluttered behind his back. The terrifying sounds within his body magnified in volume to the point where the spectators thought they could hear sounds of a tsunami crashing. Qin Wentian was currently undergoing a transformation; the seven circular arterial pathways of his were currently squirming as they expanded before breaking into fragments and reforming into eight brand-new circular Stellar Meridians arterial pathways.

His breakthrough swept the remnants of the blockage in his previous arterial pathways away, allowing his Astral Energy to once more circulate without restrictions. Currently, the aura Qin Wentian was exuding was rising relentlessly.

That was an aura of someone at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation!

Qin Wentian...he was unwilling to allow others to control his fate.

Such underhanded schemes weren't able to destroy his beliefs nor shake his unwavering heart!

His determination had never been this strong before.

Today, the number one position would be his!

AGM 144 – Number One!

Standing atop the platform, Qin Wentian felt like a peerless existence as his black hair and robes fluttered in the wind. The aura he exuded transformed into a gale with the force of a hurricane, sweeping across the entire platform.

At this moment, Qin Wentian's figure looked terrifyingly demonic and incredibly handsome. He stood there as though he was the only existence in this world, emanating a sense of 'who but myself could do it, if I so wish to conquer this world.'

The radiance of Luo Qianqiu was initially so dazzling but now, his radiance seemed to be fully suppressed.

“He broke through..”

The spectators felt as though they were in a dream. Qin Wentian actually broke through at the most crucial moment and stepped into the 8th level of Arterial Circulation.

How long had it been since the time he broke through to the 7th level? Cultivation breakthroughs required going through a process and was definitely not possible because of a single day's effort.

However, before dawn today, Qin Wentian forcefully woke his Bloodline Limit. The terrifying power had almost swallowed him whole. Despite his will and perseverance, he still spent a huge amount of time before he was finally triumphant. That was also why he almost missed the third round of the Jun Lin Banquet.

Once the power of his bloodline was awakened, it ignited the potential of his acupoints and expanded his arterial pathways almost to the point of a breakthrough. This, as well as a combination of other factors, was what made the breakthrough to the 8th level possible in that previous instant.

At this moment, the looks of worries and anxiety disappeared from the faces of the Emperor Star Academy's representatives.

Especially Ren Qianxing. A heartfelt smile appeared on his face as he gazed at the silhouette of the youth standing on the stage.

He was happy, truly happy, that he had not made the wrong judgement. Qin Wentian's weakness must have been caused by the Nine Mystical Palace.

He felt ashamed of the suspicions he previously had about Qin Wentian. He shouldn't have had the slightest doubt. The Emperor Star Academy had long since conducted a personality analysis and detailed background check on Qin Wentian. How could such a youth be tempted because of the prospect of self-interest?

"Since you are loyal to our academy, we will definitely do all we can to grant you a piece of clear sky to spread your wings and soar." Ren Qianxing silently remarked in his heart. That cold, stone heart of his had finally cracked today; a feeling of warmth seeped inside.

Mo Qingcheng also had a radiant smile on her face. Even Qin Yao,

Luo Huan, Mu Rou, Fan Le, and Immortal Drunken Wine broke into smiles.

Since Qin Wentian had already broke through, this indicated that everything was already predestined.

Luo Qianqiu would never be able to block Qin Wentian's path ever again.

Qin Wentian was already so overwhelming when he had a cultivation base at the 7th level, easily crushing Sikong Mingyue. Although the spectators didn't know why Qin Wentian appeared to be so weak in the beginning of his fight with Luo Qianqiu, in their hearts, they all wanted to know the exact reason.

However, these questions were no longer important. They were all silently speculating that since Qin Wentian had broken through, Luo Qianqiu should no longer be a match for Qin Wentian.

Currently, Luo Qianqiu was also staring at Qin Wentian. His gaze stiffened as he felt the change in Qin Wentian's aura. It was as though, for the first time in his life, he felt that this person in front of him had the power to defeat him.

Qin Wentian similarly stared back at Luo Qianqiu. He took a step forwards, and the terrifying presence of his blasted forth. The ancient halberd in his hands seemed to shine with a glimmer as he locked gazes with his opponent.

Today, he wanted to be number one. No, he will be the number one.

“In your heart, you should already know whether I’m speaking the truth.” Qin Wentian calmly spoke. He didn’t announce the fact that the Nine Mystical Palace had drugged him.

To him, this held no advantage. So what if everyone knew that the Nine Mystical Palace was this despicable?

The power of the Nine Mystical Palace was something he still couldn’t contend against. So what if everyone knew the truth? The Nine Mystical Palace was still the Nine Mystical Palace. In this land, power determined everything.

Qin Wentian finally struck out with his ancient halberd, executing the first stance of his Great Dream Halberd Art, Mountain Splitter.

The halberd stroke like a dream, with a speed like that of lightning, as heavy as a mountain, splitting apart the Heavens and Earth

Luo Qianqiu howled in madness as an illusory Lightning Revenant formed behind him, striking out with a palm of lightning that smashed against the ancient halberd.

Boom!

The lightning palm crumbled, forcing Luo Qianqiu to explosively

retreat.

However, a pitter-patter sound could be heard. The spectators could see that his chest was actually dripping blood.

Upon witnessing this, the spectators all drew in a huge breath. It seemed like the position of the Jun Lin Banquet's champion was already destined to belong to Qin Wentian.

They felt that they were all extremely fortunate to be able to witness this miraculous turn-about with their very own eyes.

“Actually, Luo Qianqiu, you are nothing much.”

Qin Wentian's serene voice drifted out, causing Luo Qianqiu to turn ashen. But currently, Qin Wentian did indeed have the qualifications to say such a sentence.

Not even a year had passed, but Luo Qianqiu, the unparalleled existence from back then, was forced into retreat by Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian undoubtedly had the qualifications to say what he said.

However, the crowds also understood. It wasn't that Luo Qianqiu was weak, but that Qin Wentian was the true demon of the Emperor Star Academy.

Geniuses, what were they? There were so many who were referred to as geniuses in Chu, but if they were to be placed in a place like the Nine Mystical Palace, would they still have the cheek to call themselves geniuses?

Luo Qianqiu's radiance had been so resplendent at first. But now, before Qin Wentian, he was nothing but a stepping stone.

Boom! Qin Wentian took another step forwards as he executed the Garuda Movement Technique, appearing in front of Luo Qianqiu in an instant.

The 2nd Stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art – Fallen Star. The instant this strike was executed, Luo Qianqiu felt an impending sense of doom approaching his way. The pressure billowing over had an aura of total annihilation. He was not certain whether he would be able to defend against this strike.

Spirals of brilliant constellations smashed towards Luo Qianqiu, who howled in madness. Using the entirety of his power, both his palms blasted out at the same time.

BOOM! A terrifying storm engulfed the platform, and after the swirling fog was cleared, the spectators only saw Luo Qianqiu standing there with his countenance immeasurably pale, spitting out fresh blood.

“Is he still not going to concede?”

The spectators were silently speculating in their hearts.

Luo Qianqiu was proud. He would never be able to force himself to speak out his admission of defeat. After all, he was Luo Qianqiu.

“Die!” Qin Wentian coldly shouted. The Mountain-type Divine Energy within his body frenziedly circulated, smashing forth with his halberd. Luo Qianqiu continually retreated as blood flowed relentlessly from his mouth.

Chu Tianjiao looked indifferent as he silently glanced at what was happenings. He knew that he had no authority to handle the situation at the Jun Lin Banquet.

Next to Chu Tianjiao, the middle-aged man from the Nine Mystical Palace finally had a fluctuation in his expressions.

Ultimately, his strategy failed. Qin Wentian actually proved to be such a game-changing variable.

He had drugged his wine, causing his energy flow to run amok, but to think that Qin Wentian would actually break through at an unexpected moment, cleansing the effects of the drug.

As long as Luo Qianqiu obtained the number one position, regardless of everything, he would step onto the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion and follow through to the 8th level. Even if the Emperor Star Academy was unwilling, there was nothing they could do about it.

However, if Luo Qianqiu was defeated, according to the agreement made long ago, they, the Nine Mystical Palace, would still be unable to access the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

The middle-aged man shot a glance at the youngsters standing beside him. He didn't say anything else but conveyed what he wanted to say with his eyes alone.

“Stay your hand.” One of them called out as he dashed in the direction of the platform. His silhouette flickered before it vanished, arriving on the platform in an instant.

“The battle has yet to be concluded.” Qin Wentian glanced coldly at him. Luo Qianqiu had not conceded, and thus this battle wasn't concluded.

“I said stop.” The youth on the platform was clad in a sky-blue robe and appeared to be more than twenty years of age. The presence he was exuding was that of Yuanfu.

As he took a step forwards, instantly, a pressure akin to a heavy mountain seemed to fall on Qin Wentian's shoulder.

Qin Wentian ignored this as he shifted his gaze over, glancing at Luo Qianqiu. “The debt of humiliation you gave me back then, I will pay it all back to you today.”

As the sound of his voice faded, the Astral Energy within his

eight arterial pathways started to erupt. As they gathered on his ancient halberd, Qin Wentian decisively smashed forwards with it.

Luo Qianqiu did his utmost to defend, but he was a spent force. His defense crumbled almost instantly as his body was flung through the air. Blood sprayed about like a fountain before he slammed heavily below the platform.

The first time Luo Qianqiu met Qin Wentian, how insufferably arrogant he had been, forcing him to choose between two options – handing over the blood ember fruits or death.

Today, their positions were reversed. Qin Wentian was the one glancing down disdainfully at him.

“He won.”

Countless people personally witnessed the scene, as their hearts trembled.

Qin Wentian ultimately defeated Luo Qianqiu, thereby obtaining the top ranking of the Jun Lin Banquet.

At this moment, that silhouette standing on the platform, how dazzling was he?

“Champion of the Jun Lin Banquet!” Mustang drew in a deep breath. He had initially thought that Qin Wentian would only be able to properly display his radiance a year from now. Who would

have thought that he had truly defeated Luo Qianqiu today, snatching the position of champion from Luo Qianqiu's fingertips.

He had never felt this proud before. Being able to stand here on the first towering platform right now was something he earned with his own efforts.

"He's number one!" Mo Qingcheng's dainty fist were rightly clenched. She drove her fist up in the air, cheering for Qin Wentian

"I knew long ago that you would be able to do it." Mu Rou's eyes were filled with a gentle smile.

Qin Yao was so moved that tears could be seen flowing down her face. A year ago, he had been a trash unable to cultivate, but now, her brother was the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, his name resounding throughout the world!

"Good fellow." Luo Huan and Mountain smiled as they glanced at each other.

Fatty Fan Le laughed so much that his eyes became squinted. He felt an exceptional pride; the one standing on the platform was none other than his brother.

"You just became a millionaire." Immortal Drunken Wine laughed as he spoke to the young man standing beside him. That young man also appeared astonished; he had never expected that

Qin Wentian would actually become the champion.

Naturally, there were also many others who were unhappy.

Janus and Qiu Mo had heavy expressions on their faces.

Those from the Ye and Ou Clan also had unsightly expressions on their countenances.

Murin and Gretchen froze, as though they could not believe what just happened.

Liu Yan felt an indescribable emotion welling up in her heart.

Bai Qingsong had a troubled look on his face. Ten thousands of what-if's floated up in his mind.

As for Autumn Snow, she knew for sure that she belonged to a totally different world when compared to the youth currently standing on the platform.

As for Sikong Mingyu, Orchon and the rest, no one knew exactly what they were thinking at this moment.

The Jun Lin Banquet finally concluded after three days.

Qin Wentian was number one.

Who was second? Who was third? The rest were no longer important. People would only pay attention to the existence standing at the pinnacle.

The Jun Lin Banquet finally concluded, but has it really ended?

At the very least least, there were still some who haven't reconciled with Qin Wentian's victory and were full of malice and reluctance. Qin Wentian had not followed their instructions!

AGM 145 – Dominance

Luo Yunhai was truly shocked by the outcome.

Although Qin Wentian had displayed a level of power that could be considered outstanding earlier, he would never have thought that Qin Wentian would be able to defeat his nephew, Luo Qianqiu.

Back in the past, how talented had his older brother Luo Tianya been? He was recognised by the Nine Mystical Palace and was subsequently recruited over.

Under the decree set by the Nine Mystical Palace and following the Luo Tianya's orders, he had come to the Jun Lin Banquet in Chu. His mission was to ensure that Luo Qianqiu would obtain the first ranking regardless of the method. Failure was not allowed.

Everything else paled in comparison to the success of Luo Qianqiu's mission.

If he could have anticipated Qin Wentian's true level of martial prowess, he would have already disqualified Qin Wentian back then when he was late. Although he followed up with some underhanded saving measures after Qin Wentian defeated Sikong Mingyue, it was apparently not enough.

Who could have anticipated that Qin Wentian would actually break through abruptly, snatching the number one position away from Luo Qianqiu's hands?

In reality, he recognised Qin Wentian's talent and wanted to recruit him over to the Nine Mystical Palace. What a pity that Qin

Wentian wasn't keen.

“He did so for glory?”

Luo Yunhai gazed at the youth standing on the platform as he silently thought, “What a fool.” Qin Wentian, because of a moment of glory, actually went ahead and defied the decree set by the Nine Mystical Palace?

Such behavior was truly foolish.

The majority of the spectators didn't know what Luo Yunhai was thinking about. Only those with relevant backgrounds and great power knew of and understood the reason why Luo Yunhai and this bunch of disciples from the Nine Mystical Palace came here today.

The gazes of the other ignorant spectators were all riveted on the silhouette of the youth standing on the platform as congratulatory expressions could be seen on their faces. Qin Wentian from Sky Harmony City actually walked to the end, obtaining the championship at a young age of 17. In the history of the Jun Lin Banquet, this was unprecedented.

The name of that youth was Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian, from the Qin Clan.

His smile at this moment was as bright and radiant as the sun. As he gazed at the smiles of the academy's Elders, seeing the dainty fist Mo Qingcheng raised into the air, the congratulations in Mu Rou's eyes, the excited screams of Fan Le, he was extremely happy.

He did not need the empty pride or glory. Everything was fine as long as he didn't disappoint those who were concerned about him.

Thus, he was happy.

But because he was happy, there was also others who were unhappy.

A surge of immense killing intent locked onto him as that Yuanfu Realm young man on the stage took another step forward. A thunderous sound echoed out, causing a tremor of immense magnitude to rock the platform.

“Hmm?” In the waves of jubilation, shock and astonishment followed after Qin Wentian obtained the first ranking. The spectators had already forgotten about the Yuanfu Realm disciple that appeared earlier.

“The Jun Lin Banquet has already concluded ,and it should be time to announce the result. What do you mean by barging up on to the platform? Are you intentionally trampling on the face of Chu's Royal Clan?”

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, Old Gu stood up as he coldly remarked. The gaze of the spectators all shifted to Chu Tianjiao, who was sitting in the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat, only to see him quietly sitting there as though all the disturbances had nothing to do with him.

He, Chu Tianjiao, didn't want to be involved in these muddy waters. This matter was between the Emperor Star Academy and Nine Mystical Palace. It had nothing to do with him.

Currently, Chu Tianjiao was thinking; Since Qin Wentian defied their orders and went ahead to snatch the position of the first ranker from Luo Qianqiu, would the Nine Mystical Palace still spare him?

No one blocked the Yuanfu Realm young man on the platform. The voice of the Emperor Star Academy was seemingly ignored by the Royal Clan.

“In a battle between sect members, your methods are actually so ruthless.” The young man stared at Qin Wentian as he took yet another step forward. This time, he clenched his hand into a fist as he punched out, realising a terrifying energy that smashed towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian raised his ancient halberd in defense, but that powerful impact almost flung the ancient halberd from his grip. The impact was so powerful that Qin Wentian's body trembled severely from the aftershock as he retreated unceasingly.

Luo Qianqiu and Qin Wentian were all from the same academy and thus could be considered as members from the same sect.

However, the reason provided by the Yuanfu disciple was too laughable. Although the two contestants were from the same sect, how had Luo Qianqiu treated Qin Wentian in the past? Now that he was defeated, they still had the gall to bring up the 'reason' of being in the same sect. Wasn't he obviously just finding an excuse?

“How impudent.”

“Ridiculous.”

Several of the spectators began booing. Old Gu, Mustang and a few other Yuanfu cultivators from the Emperor Star Academy began to soar in the air as they flew towards the direction of the towering platform.

However, at this instant, another silhouette appeared on the platform. This person was none other than Luo Yunhai.

He stood there serenely. A towering, terrifying pressure emanated forth from him, sweeping across the skies. Old Gu and the rest froze in mid-air, their countenance pale.

“All of you, what do you treat the platform of the Jun Lin Banquet as?” Luo Yunhai calmly remarked. When that towering sense of pressure erupted forth, the whole space went silent. All of them could clearly feel how suffocating that terrifying pressure was; it was as though the pressure was sufficient to suppress them.

“Luo Yunhai.” Old Gu icily replied, “Since Luo Qianqiu lost, he lost. Is the Nine Mystical Palace planning to be so despicable?”

“Luo Yunhai..his surname is Luo as well. Could he be related to Luo Qianqiu?” The crowd silently speculated.

“Don’t worry, we are merely helping the Emperor Star Academy to discipline a junior and won’t do anything too intense to him.” Luo Yunhai’s voice remained as serene as before.

Bizarre expressions appeared on the faces of the crowd as they took in this latest development.

The Jun Lin Banquet had been organised for so many years in Chu, and since the beginning, no one who had ever dared to created trouble here before.

But today, there was actually someone who wanted to make trouble at the banquet?

Not only that, the Royal Clan of Chu seemed to be blind to it, not intending to take any actions.

Chu Tianjiao calmly sat atop the Emperor Seat. It was as though he was just an outsider.

“The Nine Mystical Palace.”

There were several within the crowd who had heard of the existence of the Nine Mystical Palace before. As the waves of realization hit them, their hearts couldn’t help but shudder. It turned out that Luo Qianqiu originated from there. If that was the case, had this Jun Lin Banquet been nothing but a farce right from the start?

Previously, there was no trouble because there was no Luo Qianqiu.

But this time was different. This year, the Nine Mystical Palace definitely had to ensure that Luo Qianqiu would be the champion, but all their plans were spoiled by Qin Wentian.

“The top nine rankers of the Jun Lin Banquet, come up here now.” Luo Yunhai continued, unperturbed. An instant later, Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen, Orchon and the rest all stood atop the towering platform. Everyone was present with the exception of 2nd Sword, who was killed, Luo Huan, and Gu Xing.

“We, the Nine Mystical Palace had always paid close attention to the elites of the Jun Lin Banquet. For those who are talented enough, they would receive an invitation to join my Nine Mystical Palace for cultivation. Naturally, this year will be the same as well.” Luo Yunhai indifferently spoke, his tone filled with an unmistakable arrogance. But they, the Nine Mystical Palace, did indeed have the qualifications to be arrogant in Chu.

In Chu, they were the silent dictator, the power behind the throne.

“Today, making use of this opportunity, I’d like to announce that Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lǜ are both already disciples of the Nine Mystical Palace.”

Crown Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao, and Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lǜ. They, were already disciples of the Nine

Mystical Palace.

These two were going to be the future emperors of their respective country, but they also had another set of identities – disciples of the Nine Mystical Palace.

“Luo Qianqiu is a disciple as well. And today, I want to extend the invitation to Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen, Orchon, and Hou Tie. Are all of you willing to join my Nine Mystical Palace?” Luo Yunhai ignored the astonishment of the crowd as he continued, extending his invitations to the various elites.

“I’m willing.” Sikong Mingyue bowed.

“I’m willing.” Chu Chen agreed.

“I’m willing.” Orchon agreed.

“I’m willing.” Hou Tie agreed.

The thunderous sounds of agreement rang out. Not only that, even Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lǜ stood up from their seats of honor and walked beneath the platform, indicating their respect to the Nine Mystical Palace.

“Very well. From today onwards, all of you are welcome to come to my Nine Mystical Palace at any time. Naturally, if you wish to spend a few years cultivating outside before coming, you are more than welcome to do so. You are free to do as you wish.” Luo Yunhai

laughed and continued, “This time around, there are so many elites discovered at the Jun Lin Banquet. I’m exceptionally happy. I want all of you to work together and respect each other. Don’t follow the example of a particular person, so ruthless even towards his fellow sect member.”

Luo Yunhai’s intentions were obvious, as the gazes of the crowd shifted once again to Qin Wentian.

The first ranker, Qin Wentian, was actually not invited to join the Nine Mystical Palace?

He should have been the most dazzling one, but it was as though the Nine Mystical Palace had the intention to humiliate him because he had gone against their decree.

The Nine Mystical Palace had given him a chance before, but Qin Wentian rejected it.

Those from the Emperor Star Academy all had unsightly expressions on their faces. They would never have imagined that the Nine Mystical Palace would pull such a move, using their imposing brilliance to overshadow Qin Wentian’s radiance.

The Nine Mystical Palace...they did indeed have this level of qualifications.

Boom. Yet another thunderous sound rocked the platform as the Yuanfu Realm young man once again took another step towards

Qin Wentian.

The Nine Mystical Palace said that they would merely teach Qin Wentian ‘a lesson’. But to what extent?

Did they want to cripple his cultivation?

How would the experts from Emperor Star Academy be willing to accept such an outcome? Disregarding Luo Yunhai, they flew towards the platform, only to see Luo Yunhai soar into the skies as his Qi, which was at the peak of Yuanfu, frenziedly swept out, causing reverence to fill in the hearts of many.

If that expert from Mo Clan or the principal of the Emperor Star Academy didn’t appear, there would be next to no one strong enough to contend against Luo Yunhai.

“Is this the power of the Nine Mystical Palace?”

“Mighty, hegemonic, unreasonable.”

This was true power. In this world, there were no rights nor wrong, nor was there logic. There was only power.

“Who dares to interfere in the matters of my Nine Mystical Palace?” Luo Yunhai shouted. Silence descended upon the stage.

An indescribable feeling arose in the hearts of the spectators when they gazed at Luo Yunhai before glancing again at Qin

Wentian,

“Ai, is this all the Nine Mystical Palace amounts to?”

A voice could be heard drifting out from among the crowd.

In the countless masses of the crowd, a pathway involuntarily opened. An old man with white hair slowly walked out.

A gentle smile adorned his face as he gazed at the silhouette of the lonely youth standing on the platform.

“Since you managed to become the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, today I shall accompany you to lord over the world” The serene voice of the old man was like a gust of wind that drifted into the eardrums of the crowd.

Today, I shall accompany you to lord over the world!

AGM 146 – The Power Of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns

Clad in a plain unadorned robe, with a head full of white hair, appearing as though he was ready for the grave yet still wanted to dominate the world.

As he walked slowly up the platform, the gazes of the countless people in the Chu Emperor District were riveted on him. Who was this old man?

“Gongyang Hong.” In the spectators’ stand, many people recognised Gongyang Hong with trembling hearts. This was Gongyang Hong. His black hair had actually turned completely white. What happened to him?

“It’s the Grandmaster Divine Inscriptionist, Gongyang Hong. He actually stepped out for Qin Wentian.”

Many people were in shock. Although Gongyang Hong had an extremely high level of attainment in Divine Inscriptions, how could his strength defend against the horde of people who hailed from the Nine Mystical Palace?

Not only that, he seemed to have the intention of making a move on behalf of Qin Wentian. Could they have known each other long ago from the incident with the divine inscription painting?

Luo Yunhai gazed at Gongyang Hong as an expression of ridicule

could be seen flickering in his eyes. In the Chu Country, there was actually someone who dared to taunt the Nine Mystical Palace?

Did this old man not know the level of power their Nine Mystical Palace had?

“Scram.”

The Yuanfu Realm young man changed his direction, taking a step towards Gongyang Hong while his killing intent gushed out.

Was this old man courting death?

“How unbridled. For tens of years, no one has ever dare spoken to me in this manner.” Gongyang Hong coldly replied. As the Yuanfu Realm young man approached him, his palms slightly waved, and in an instant, an immense explosion of Astral Light occurred as the entire platform was bathed in resplendence radiance. The spectators could see the a gigantic arm manifesting as it absorbed the inexhaustible starlight, it was as though the arm appeared straight from the heavens.

The palm of the arm opened and abruptly grabbed towards the direction of the young man. This celestial arm was as though it was filled with heavenly might, seemingly unable to be defended against.

The countenance of the young man abruptly changed. He punched out a multitude of fist lights. Gongyang Hong’s celestial

arm was like a heavenly divine artifact, paying no attentions to the feeble attacks of the Yuanfu cultivator as it directly grabbed hold of the young man.

Buzz. With the speed of a raging wind, the young man was clutched in the palms of the celestial arm, which relocated its position, moving towards the skies. Before the might of this arm, the powerful Yuanfu cultivator was akin to an ant-like existence.

Gongyang Hong extended his hands towards the air. It was as though the celestial arm was an extension of himself, and he was easily able to control it like a part of his own body.

“Didn’t your parents teach you manners?” Gongyang Hong calmly spoke. The Astral Celestial Arm lurched and flung the poor Yuanfu cultivator through the skies.

In that instant, the young man’s body was blasted off to the horizon, and he sailed through the air, his final destination unknown.

Gongyang Hong acted as though he was taking out the garbage, casually tossing a Yuanfu Realm expert around like a plaything.

This display of strength caused everyone to freeze.

“How powerful is he?!”

Their hearts were all trembling violently. How could Gongyang

Hong be this strong?

Luo Yunhai's countenance also paled. Since he was someone at the peak of Yuanfu, how could he not understand what just happened?

That earlier outburst of Astral Light was an indication of someone at the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

Those from the Royal Clan, those from the Emperor Star Academy, and all the experts at the scene felt as though a tremendous wave just arose in their hearts.

Many years ago, Gongyang Hong had also been the champion of the Jun Lin banquet. After he returned to Chu following his disappearance, he had always been immersed in the field of Divine Inscriptions. Who would have thought that right from the start, he was already a hegemonic Heavenly Dipper Realm powerhouse.

"Roll down here for me." Gongyang Hong spat out the words, targeting them at Luo Yunhai. The tone of his voice was exceptionally tyrannical.

It was as though many black lines appeared on Luo Yunhai's face as his facial muscles contorted. However, his body gradually descended and landed upon the ground.

How awe-inspiring had Luo Yunhai been earlier? But because of a single sentence from Gongyang Hong, he actually became so

obedient as though he was nothing but a little child.

“Your Excellency, you are? Yunhai hopes that Your Excellency wouldn’t interfere with the Nine Mystical Palace’s affairs.” Luo Yunhai’s imposing aura from earlier had already been deflated. This was the Chu Country, not the Nine Mystical Palace. If they were in the Nine Mystical Palace, he wouldn’t have feared Gongyang Hong.

Over here, any Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns could easily annihilate their bunch of Yuanfu cultivators from the Nine Mystical Palace.

“Shut your mouth.”

Gongyang Hong coldly snorted as he continued, “Has the prestige of the Nine Mystical Palace fallen so much that they have to exhibit their might in such a place as Chu to feel good?”

As he spoke, Gongyang Hong slowly ambled forward and stood beside Qin Wentian.

As their gazes met, he smiled. “Little fellow, I didn’t think that you would actually become the champion of the Jun Lin banquet this year. What a pleasant surprise.”

Qin Wentian was also very joyful when he took note of Gongyang Hong’s smile. Back then, he had been very worried about Gongyang Hong, whose heart already seemed dead.

Today, however, Gongyang Hong appeared on the platform and wanted to accompany him to dominate the world. How awe-inspiring was he! This was the aura that should match with someone of Gongyang Hong's caliber.

"Wasn't Senior also the champion before? There's nothing amazing about my achievements." Qin Wentian laughed.

"That's different. I obtained the championship with a cultivation base at the peak of Arterial Circulation while you obtained the same accomplishment with merely a cultivation base at the 8th level. From this point alone, you are already many times more outstanding when compared to me." Gongyang Hong continued smiling. Ever since the day Qin Wentian had spoken this words 'The past is now past, and the future is too far away. Only the present matters' to him, he had already felt that he couldn't be compared to the youth standing before him.

"Luo Qianqiu, Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen, and Orchon. Although they couldn't be considered bad, they are still not at your level. What's laughable is that as a pretext to humiliate you, the Nine Mystical Palace actually tossed a gem like you in the garbage while recruiting the rest of them. Isn't that sad? Isn't that ridiculous?"

After which, Gongyang Hong turned and shifted his gaze to Luo Yunhai.

"Are you not afraid that the Nine Mystical Palace's reputation

will be smirched by the actions you took today if somehow this matter were to be leaked outside?” Gongyang Hong serenely continued, “And based on the degree of talent Qin Wentian displayed today, he could choose any of the great powers—Misty Peak, Sunset Mountains, or the Phoenix Valley—to join, and they would gladly accept him with open arms. The Nine Mystical Palace have no qualifications to be choosy. Are you sure you understand what you are doing?”

“But just as well. From my perspective, the Nine Mystical Palace isn’t worthy of Qin Wentian’s talent.” Gongyang Hong’s words blasted out like a slap across Luo Yunhai’s face, causing the spectators to involuntarily draw in deep breaths.

Gongyang Hong was Gongyang Hong indeed. Back in his days, after the Jun Lin Banquet, Gongyang Hong left Chu and explored the world. His experience wasn’t limited to merely the Nine Mystical Palace.

Earlier, they had witnessed Luo Yunhai’s haughty and imposing aura, so far above the Heavens. He had invited the elites to join the Nine Mystical Palace, painting the picture of a peerless existence in the minds of the spectators.

However, after a few words from Gongyang Hong, the illusory picture was torn apart.

This time around, Qin Wentian was the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet. What qualifications did the Nine Mystical Palace have to ‘select’ him? Didn’t the power of selection resided in Qin Wentian instead?

Back then, Gongyang Hong had also been the champion but he didn't choose to join the Nine Mystical Palace. In the end, he also became a peerless existence and returned back to Chu. Why couldn't Qin Wentian do the same? He might very well be the next Gongyang Hong, or someone even stronger than him!

“If you really wish to depart from Chu, I can send you on your way and refer a few powerful schools for you to join.”

Gongyang Hong turned his head as he smiled at Qin Wentian. Although he was smiling, the words he just spoke were not a joke.

As long as Qin Wentian agreed, he would immediately bring Qin Wentian away. Based on Qin Wentian's talent, Chu was too small to contain him. He needed to explore the world to find a piece of bigger sky.

Qin Wentian naturally knew that Gongyang Hong wouldn't lie to him. The Nine Mystical Palace wanted to deal with him via humiliation? Gongyang Hong's words were informing everyone in Chu, as well as telling Qin Wentian not to be too overly affected by Luo Yunhai's words. He should broaden his horizons and not allow his perspective to be limited by a mere Nine Mystical Palace.

So what they controlled ten over countries? How immense was this world?

If one were to liken this world to the Nine Heavenly Layers, Chu Country would merely be at situated the lowest Heavenly Layer.

Over there, one could never be able to see the entirety of the beautiful fields of stars if they remained only on the lowest layer.

However, Qin Wentian still had some things he had yet to accomplish in Chu. He had still kin and friends here. It wouldn't be too realistic if he departed straight away.

“Seems like you still have some unfinished business here in Chu. After today, I will depart from Chu, but on your behalf, I will recommend you to some of the powerful schools and sects out there in the world to see if they have any interest in recruiting you. Or maybe, after I finish what I need to do, I will return to Chu once again to look for you.”

Gongyang Hong laughed, after which he shifted his gaze to Chu Tianjiao. “You are the Crown Prince of Chu? What rewards did you prepare for the champion of this year's Jun Lin Banquet?”

Chu Tianjiao glanced at Gongyang Hong, as an indescribable emotion rose in his heart. The powerful Gongyang Hong had no need to bother about his background or status, and could talk to him like he was talking to a servant. This, indeed, was power.

But before Chu Tianjiao could even reply. Gongyang Hong interjected, “Forget it. Since it's a reward, let's just allow Qin Wentian to choose what he want. Qin Wentian, as the champion of the Jun Lin banquet, what rewards do you want?”

“I want my father and grandpa to be released.”

Qin Wentian stared at Chu Tianjiao, his countenance as sharp as a sword.

He came to the Royal Capital of Chu, he got increasingly stronger, and he participated in the Jun Lin Banquet. Everything he did was only for a single reason.

His father, Qin Chuan, and his grandpa, Qin Wu, were still imprisoned within the Black Stronghold of Chu.

“Impossible. They are rebels, so how can I release them?” Chu Tianjiao coldly snorted.

“I said, release.” Gongyang Hong stared at Chu Tianjiao. His attitude was like a hegemon, looking for no further discussion.

Chu Tianjiao’s expression was extremely unsightly. His voice quavered as he replied, “If I have to release, I can only release Qin Chuan alone. Qin Wu will still be imprisoned. This is already my bottom line.”

Gongyang Hong glanced at Qin Wentian, who was staring at Chu Tianjiao. A resolute, cold, and unwavering light could be seen flickering in his eyes.

“Fine.” Qin Wentian nodded. He had already expected that he would be unable to save his father.

“Gongyang Hong, you meddle too much.”

At this moment, a voice filled with the power of a raging storm echoed out from a distance.

Gongyang Hong slightly creased his brows as he gazed off in the horizon, only to see a gigantic palm made from thunder smashing down towards him from the Heavens.

“Hmph.” Gongyang Hong coldly snorted. His Astral Celestial Arm Nova blasted out in rage. In the skies, the two gigantic palms met and exploded simultaneously from the impact amidst a typhoon of roiling, chaotic Qi.

At this moment, a silhouette descended from the skies. This person was clad in skyblue robes, displaying his might with no anger. His facial features also appeared similar to Luo Qianqiu and Luo Yunhai.

Upon seeing this man, back in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, Ren Qianxing trembled violently as his countenance grew extremely ugly to behold.

Luo Tianya came from the Nine Mystical Palace, but at the same time, he had also previously been a student of the Emperor Star Academy!

He actually came to Chu!

AGM 147 – Finally Unveiled!

Luo Tianya stood proudly in the air, exuding a extremely tyrannical aura.

The crowds in the Chu Emperor District all inclined their heads as they gazed at him with huge waves of emotions rising in their hearts. A never before seen Heavenly Dipper Sovereign was actually present in Chu. Not only that, they actually saw two.

For people like this, they were the stuff of the fabled legends. But now, the sovereigns appeared in front of their very eyes

“This person is Luo Qianqiu’s father. Like father like son, seems like there’s hidden agenda behind Luo Qianqiu enrolling in the Emperor Star Academy.” Many people were silently speculating. With a background like Luo Qianqiu’s, why did he still need to cultivate in the Emperor Star Academy? Obviously, there was a purpose behind it.

“Father.” Luo Qianqiu stood below the platform as he gazed at Luo Tianya, who was standing in the skies. After which, he lowered his head and remained silent, as though he had no more face left to even look at his own father.

He was defeated by Qin Wentian and failed his mission. He didn’t have the face to look at his father.

He actually failed at a place like Chu.

“Who are you?” Luo Tianya looked at Luo Qianqiu and asked with an extremely sharp expression.

Luo Qianqiu inclined his head, looking as his father as he replied, “I am Luo Qianqiu.”

“You are Luo Qianqiu. The words ‘gutless’ and ‘coward’ are not in your dictionary. Furthermore, in the grand path of cultivation, how could there not be any failures? Is your martial heart so weak?” Luo Tianya’s voice boomed out as he berated, “Raise your head up high. You are Luo Qianqiu, son of Luo Tianya.”

Luo Qianqiu was shocked into realization. Clenching both his hands into fists, he raised his head. So what if he had lost today? No matter what, he was still a student from the Nine Mystical Palace. And as for the humiliation he suffered today, he would cleanse the slate with Qin Wentian’s blood in the future.

Luo Qianqiu once again directed his gaze to Qin Wentian. The killing intent he emitted grew incomparably sharp.

Qin Wentian was a blemish in his life. He would cleanse it sooner or later

“Luo Tianya, no wonder this child’s features were so familiar. It turns out he was your son.” Gongyang Hong gazed at the silhouette floating in the skies as he spoke. It seems as though he was acquainted with Luo Tianya.

“Gongyang Hong, it’s fine if you return to Chu, but why did you have to interfere with the matters of my Nine Mystical Palace?” Luo Tianya coldly inquired.

“The Nine Mystical Palace is too much of a bully. I can’t ignore that,” Gongyang Hong replied.

“Hmph.” Luo Tianya coldly snorted, “In Chu, no one can interfere with matters of my Nine Mystical Palace. Do you think that with you alone, you can block my Nine Mystical Palace from doing what they want?”

After saying this, Luo Tianya took a step downwards. A crushing pressure gushed forth towards Gongyang Hong and Qin Wentian.

Gongyang Hong extended his hands and retaliated against the attack with his Constellation Celestial Arm Nova. Rumbling sounds could be heard in the middle of the air, as though something just crumbled apart.

“I don’t care what the Nine Mystical Palace wishes to do. However, today, Qin Wentian is the legitimate champion. If the Nine Mystical Palace wants revenge because your son lost to him, I will never allow it.” Gongyang Hong remarked, the power in his voice apparent.

“Just by yourself? You want to make an enemy out of my Nine Mystical Palace? How ridiculous.” Luo Tianya sneered as he descended further down, the might of lightning and thunder

sweeping across the space. Luo Qianqiu and the rest had already backed away, leaving only Gongyang Hong and Qin Wentian in the middle of the tempest.

“I’m indeed unable to interfere as I like with regards your Nine Mystical Palace. But if you continue to be so thick-skinned and shamelessly bully the junior generations, it’s as easy as flipping my palms for me, Gongyang Hong, to kill the members of your junior generations.” The Celestial Heavenly Arm was flexing about in the air, as the two of them opposed each other’s words with equal harshness.

“So what he is the champion? I want to see to what extent he can mature to.”

Luo Tianya swept a gaze that was as sharp as swords over to Qin Wentian. He had never once believed that the path of cultivation was like a smooth-sailing highway, even for a genius. The path of cultivation was filled with storms of struggle and violence, leaving behind countless dried up husks of skeletons. Without a strong willpower and some luck, there was no way for a ‘genius’ to truly become a peerless existence.

“My Nine Mystical Palace won’t touch him, but in return, you are not to interfere with our other matters. Chu is the territory of my Nine Mystical Palace.” Luo Tianya tyrannically remarked. The Nine Mystical Palace was the owner of Chu.

The Nine Mystical Palace didn’t care about who the Emperor of Chu was. As long as they provided the necessary resources and convenience such as talented youths the Nine Mystical Palace

could choose from, any one from the Royal Clan could be the Emperor, provided that he followed their orders.

And as for the selection of who the Emperor was going to be, only the lower management of the Nine Mystical Palace would participate. Those at the top echelons couldn't be bothered about this.

“Don't worry, I wouldn't be so free to interfere with your business.” Gongyang Hong coldly replied. If he did not possess a fondness for Qin Wentian, he wouldn't even have bothered appearing in the first place.

Luo Tianya didn't cast Gongyang Hong another glance. Instead, he glanced in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy and greeted Ren Qianxing, “Teacher, I trust you've been well since we last met.”

“I don't have a student like you.” Ren Qianxing coldly spat out.

“Teacher, why do you have to be like this? For us cultivators, it's only natural if we pursued power. Hence, it's inevitable if we use some unsavoury methods. Although I'm now currently with the Nine Mystical Palace, I have never forgotten your kindness. This was also why I named my son Qianqiu. The character 'Qian' is the same 'Qian' as your name, to remind me of your kindness in bringing me up.”

Luo Tianya calmly spoke, but Ren Qianxing's countenance got increasingly unsightly in an instant. It was as though his hatred of

Luo Tianya has seeped into his bones.

“Since our paths are different, just forget it.” Luo Tianya shook his head, He then turned and looked at Luo Qianqiu and the rest of the members from the Nine Mystical Palace. “Let’s leave.”

As the sound of his voice faded, those from the Nine Mystical Palace rose up in the air.

Luo Tianya was holding Luo Qianqiu by his arm as he swept his gaze towards Qin Wentian. Far up in the skies, he called out to Qin Wentian, “I really want to see how far the champion of Jun Lin Banquet will be able to go on the path of cultivation. Luo Qianqiu will wait for you.”

After which, they spun in the air. Luo Tianya and those from the Nine Mystical Palace, vanished in the horizon.

Despite the departure of the Nine Mystical Palace, the hearts of the crowd were still shuddering. This was the first time the Nine Mystical Palace had shown their true colours in front of the commoners.

Only now did they realize that behind Chu, there was another terrifying existence controlling it from the shadows.

Chu Tianjiao had no authority whatsoever in front of them.

“Senior Gongyang is actually a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign.”

Reverence could be seen in the eyes of the spectators as they gazed at Gongyang Hong.

An existence at the Heavenly Dipper Realm was a character at the pinnacle of Chu. Their words was equivalent to that of a country's Emperor.

Almost all who stepped into the Heavenly Dipper Realm had already left Chu.

But naturally, if one were to say who the most dazzling star today was, the answer would undoubtedly be Qin Wentian.

Using absolute strength to claim the position of number one in the Jun Lin Banquet, climbing up the ranks from the pits of darkness. No one could have imagined that the one standing at the end would be him, Qin Wentian.

Not only that, the Emperor Star Academy was standing by his back, and even a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign was willing to become the shield for him.

“Qin Wentian, you are the pride of our academy.” Ren Qianxing laughed as he nodded to Qin Wentian. At this moment, those from the Emperor Star Academy all stood up, re-evaluating their perspective of Qin Wentian.

“Indeed, you are worthy of praise.” In the direction of Mo Clan, the crowd also stood up and congratulated Qin Wentian.

Those from the Divine Weapon Pavilion also rose at the same time. An Liuyan was full of smiles; she had never expected that this year's Jun Lin Banquet would be so fascinating.

Currently the Chu Emperor District was filled with silence. The crowds of people engraved this moment in their hearts. They would never be able to forget this year's Jun Lin Banquet.

They were grateful to Qin Wentian, grateful to all the elites up on the platforms, for allowing them to view such a remarkable show.

Tossing aside all their grudges and resentments, all the elites that participated ought to be proud of themselves.

Gongyang Hong stood at Qin Wentian's side. After patting him on the back, he smiled and glanced ahead as he spoke, "Lass from the Mu Clan, have you thought about the promise I owe you?"

Mu Rou was stunned for a moment, and after she recovered, she replied, "Senior, stop joking with me. As for that painting, just treat it a gift from me."

Mu Rou clearly knew how much weight did Gongyang Hong's words held as a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign.

"Once you thought of it, write it down and leave it in my bamboo lodge. I will see it when i return." Gongyang Hong smiled, and after which, he shifted his gaze to Chu Tianjiao. "Don't forget your

promise. Tomorrow morning, Qin Wentian must be able to see his father.”

Gongyang Hong words was akin to an imperial decree. This was how powerful the influence a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign possessed.

Luo Tianya left just like this, and those from the Nine Mystical Palace no longer troubled Qin Wentian. Could it really be because of Luo Tianya’s tolerance?

Even if he was willing to wait for Qin Wentian to mature, how about the others?

When traced back to the roots, it was still because of the existence of Gongyang Hong. Those threatening words of his to kill off their junior generations had forced Luo Tianya off today. If not for that, this matter today wouldn’t have been settled so easily.

One couldn’t begin to imagine how terrifying it was to have a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign as an enemy.

“Since this junior has agreed, I wouldn’t go back on my words.” Chu Tianjiao replied.

“Good.” Gongyang Hong nodded before shifting his gaze back to Qin Wentian. “Continue to work hard in your cultivation.”

After that, his body rose in the air, and he flew up to the skies. A

voice transmission drifted into Qin Wentian's ears.

“Be cautious in everything you do in Chu. The Chu Country has several thousand years of history and extremely deep roots. I believed that there are still hidden experts that have yet to show themselves. This was also why I didn't want to push Chu Tianjiao too far. Remember this, without sufficient power, do not clash directly with the Royal Clan.”

This transmission could only be heard by Qin Wentian, and its contents caused his heart to tremble.

So there was a reason why Gongyang Hong didn't push for the release of Qin Wu. The Royal Clan was similar to the Emperor Star Academy; both of them had incredibly deep roots.

In this chess board of the great powers, there were still many things that were unclear and hidden from him. Things were never as simple as they seemed.

Now that he became the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, it was though a burden had been lifted off his chest.

After all, his father, Qin Chuan, would finally be released from imprisonment.

Just thinking of this caused his heart to be filled with joy.

Finally, he could see his father.

Qin Yao's eyes were rimmed with tears as she proudly regarded the silhouette standing on the platform. Her little brother Qin Wentian was the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, basking in the adoration of the masses.

Not only that, he was actually successful in saving their father.

Already one year had passed from the time Qin Wentian departed the Sky Harmony City to now. Tomorrow, when their father was released, he would surely be proud of Qin Wentian!

AGM 148 – Equilibrium

On the platform, Qin Wentian, who was on the platform, was the center of the crowd's attention. And as for Chu Tianjiao, who was sitting on the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat, his countenance which had remained indifferent throughout finally showed a wave of fluctuation before quickly returning back to normal.

Even before Chu Tianjiao personally announce the Jun Lin Banquet's rankings, the spectators were already leaving.

Such an ending was obviously something that he had not wanted to see.

Even so, this didn't even affect the glory of Qin Wentian's victory in the slightest. The influence of Sikong Mingyue, Xiāo Lǔ, the Ye Clan and the Ou Clan had already faded away, similar to Chu Tianjiao.

Only those powers that had a better relationship with Qin Wentian as well as some of the more passionate members of the crowd remained, as though they still couldn't get enough of the Jun Lin Banquet's fascinating battles.

There were several who had already rushed up the platform, crowding around Qin Wentian, causing the atmosphere to be extremely lively.

But at this moment, Qin Wentian's inner state was not caught up by the passion of the crowd. On the contrary, he was extremely

calm. After witnessing Luo Tianya's strength, the power of the Nine Mystical Palace, and the might of Gongyang Hong, he had an intense desire boiling within him to become a peerless existence just like them.

If one day he depended on his own efforts and reached the realm Gongyang Hong was in, Chu Tianjiao would surely personally come up to him to offer his apologies.

Qin Wentian finally left with those from the Emperor Star Academy. The other remnants of the crowd sighed as they also gradually departed the area.

A radiant smile appeared on Mo Qingcheng's unmatched countenance. Such an amazing Jun Lin Banquet, it would be truly difficult for her to forget.

"Oi." Another figure appeared beside Mo Qingcheng. Mo Qingcheng rolled her eyes at that figure as she laughed, "Why have you come?"

"Your lover became the champion of the banquet. I'm here to congratulate you, of course." Nolan mischievously glanced at Mo Qingcheng and teased her.

Mo Qingcheng was stunned. Her face went cherry red as the gazes of her clan members were focused onto her.

"You are a dead woman, Nolan." Mo Qingcheng extended her

hands and sent out a palm strike at Nolan. Nolan dodged, laughing while she retreated. She continued, “But seriously, his performance was beyond my expectations. If you really like him, why not just get married with him?”

“..... if you want to get married that much, go marry him yourself.” Mo Qingcheng was speechless. Looking at the playful antics of the two young girls, the other members of the Mo Clan all had happy smiles on their faces.

In the direction of the Star River Association, Vice President Zuo Yin had a heavy expression on his countenance, as though he was extremely pissed off.

“Murin, ah Murin.” Zuo Yin ruthlessly spoke. Murin, who was following behind him, had his head lowered. A cold light could be seen flickering in his eyes.

“Vice President Zuo, although Qin Wentian did fully show off his abilities this time around, the Emperor Star Academy to value him more, doesn’t that also mean that he dug a hole for himself by being ignorant of hidden dangers? I think that there would be many who would not allow him to mature.” Murin tried his best to assuage Zuo Yin’s anger.

“And what has this got to do with your actions?” Zuo Yin coldly glared at Murin. “If Qin Wentian had joined our Star River Association back then, based on his talent in both cultivation and Divine Inscriptions, it would be a simple thing for me to boost him up our ranks.”

Murin coldly laughed and silently cursed in his heart, “This old bastard wanted to use Qin Wentian to climb up the ranks and pave the way for himself. How ludicrous his plans are.”

Naturally, Murin would never have the guts to say what he was thinking out loud. He could only be a yes-man, coping with Zuo Yi’s barrage, and hiding his feelings deep in his heart.

The Mo Clan and those from the Star River Association were not the only ones having varying reactions. At this moment, the spectators that had departed the Chu Emperor District all had different types of thinking and attitudes with regards to the Jun Lin Banquet.

Those who had placed bets with Heaven’s Wonder would naturally think of their bets after the Banquet was concluded.

Drunken Wonder was swamped by crowds. Fatty didn’t collect his winnings right now. After all, it didn’t matter when he would collect it. Heaven’s Wonder was a large establishment and would never run away with his bets. There was no need for him to squeeze with this crowd. Hence, he wasn’t anxious at all.

And in any case, there had been many people who witnessed him betting on Qin Wentian. He didn’t want to be robbed of his winnings right after he claimed them.

Immortal Drunken Wine and the young man beside him didn’t bother about that too much. After collecting their winnings, the

two of them went back to the simple and dilapidated wine hut with none of their winnings in sight. However, an interspatial ring could be seen on their fingers. It was obvious that all their winnings were stored inside the ring.

Immortal Drunken Wine placed his mouth at the edge of a wine cup, closing his eyes and immersing himself in the aroma as though he begrudged the idea of drinking the wine.

“What good stuff. It surely shouldn’t have been easy getting the boss of this place to bring out such good wine.” Immortal Drunken Wine smiled as he continued, “however, since you made so much money, you are going to be the one treating me this time around.”

“What a marvelous plan.” The young man laughed, “I won’t deny that I made a killing, but with your 800 stones, it should be sufficient enough to buy wine for a very long time.”

“This was all thanks to that little fellow Qin Wentian. How unexpected, how unexpected.” Immortal Drunken Wine smiled as he shook his head. Qin Wentian had actually become the champion; this was completely beyond his expectations.

“This time, not only was he the champion, he also saved his father. I guess it could be considered a beautiful ending, no?” Immortal Drunken Wine drank a small sip of wine. Indeed, he was happy for Qin Wentian.

However, the young man opposite of him actually shook his head and smiled bitterly.

“What? You have a different take on this?” Immortal Drunken Wine curiously inquired.

“You don’t understand the intricacies of things. How could it be so simple?” The young man sighed. “In reality, maintaining a thin line of equilibrium would be the best, but once this line of balance is disrupted, no one can predict what changes will happen next.”

“Why do your words sound even more drunk than those spoken by drunk people?” Immortal Drunken Wine smiled bitterly.

“How can an outsider see things clearly? Since you are unfamiliar with trickery and politics, you naturally wouldn’t understand it.” The young man murmured to himself, “The water here is truly deep. Now that Qin Wentian disturbed it, with his personality, my younger brother wouldn’t merely take it lying down, nor would the other great clans be content with it. When that time comes, the equilibrium will be broken.”

“Equilibrium?” Immortal Drunken Wine seemed as though he was lost in fog. The more he listen, the more he didn’t understand.

“Although those with the Chu royal bloodline aren’t kind people, do you really believe that they would spend so much effort to make a move against a loyal subordinate? My younger brother Chu Tianjiao is a dragon among humans; how could his degree of forbearance be so limited?” The young man finished the wine in his cup gloomily and proceeded to walk away.

“Why do you think Chu has not cleared the rebels out even after one year? It wasn’t that the Chu Royal Clan was useless, but rather that they didn’t want to completely eradicate the rebellion. This was the equilibrium, the line of balance.”

The young man walked slowly as he departed from sight. Immortal Drunken Wine stood there, stunned. He gazed at that young man’s vanishing silhouette.

An instant later, Immortal Drunken Wine laughed bitterly as he mumbled in a low voice, “No wonder he was willing to be the Unfettered Prince. A life filled with constant fighting and scheming against each other, how boring would that be? Getting drunk is still the best.”

.....

Qin Wentian finally returned to the Emperor Star Academy.

At this moment, he was inside his courtyard. Ren Qianxing, Mustang, and Luo Huan were also there. Ren Qianxing sighed, “Wentian, no one expected that you would actually obtain the first ranking. Why didn’t you let on some hints and allow the Emperor Star Academy to be fully prepared? If there’s still a next time, don’t be this rash again.”

“I also did not expect that becoming the Jun Lin Banquet’s champion would be so difficult, nor did I think that the Nine Mystical Palace would actually be so underhanded.” Qin Wentian smiled wryly. Indeed, he was still too young and unable to see

many things clearly.

After all, he was only 17. His life experiences were bound to be limited.

“Luckily, Senior Gongyang appeared, enabling you to go through a bad experience without mishaps.” Ren Qianxing smiled. Initially, he had been worried that would there be no one able to block Luo Qianqiu. Who would have thought that Qin Wentian had actually done so? Just this alone was enough for him to be happy.

“When do you want to take a look at the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?” Ren Qianxing smiled again, causing a bright glow to flicker in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

That legendary and mysterious 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, what secrets did it hide?

Back then, after Luo Qianqiu’s father went up to the 7th level, he actually used all sorts of underhanded means to trespass into the 8th level. Not only that, he was willing to sacrifice everything to let his son Luo Qianqiu enroll in the Emperor Star Academy to fight for the same chance he once had.

“After my father is released tomorrow.” Qin Wentian wasn’t that impatient. The Heavenly Star Pavilion wouldn’t disappear.

“Fine, I will get someone to go with you. Currently, with how things stands, we need to be wary of your safety.” Ren Qianxing

solemnly remarked. He naturally knew of the dangers that would follow after Qin Wentian revealed his abilities.

The state of things in the Royal Capital was extremely complicated, and the waters were exceptionally deep. From now onwards, as long as Qin Wentian wasn't in the Emperor Star Academy, they would have to protect him.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head. The Nine Mystical Palace and the Royal Clan wouldn't move against him on the surface, but who knew what would happen in the dark? Not only that, there were many clans such as the Ye and Ou Clan that were eyeing him like a tiger watching its prey.

At this moment, the sound of a crane drifted over. Raising his head, a smile broke out on his face as Ren Qianxing saw a white-colored crane flying over. “I will leave first. Make sure you rest well.”

After which, Ren Qianxing locked his gaze at Mustang, shared a mutual smile, and departed.

There were two females sitting cross-legged on the crane that was hovering in midair. They were none other than Mo Qingcheng and Nolan.

“Why are you here?” Qin Wentian gazed at the females atop the white crane as he asked with a smile on his face.

“I thought that you would be less busy now, so I wanted to come and congratulate you.” Mo Qingcheng had a flawless smile on her face.

“Why don’t you come down and take a seat?” Qin Wentian exclaimed to Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng nodded her head in agreement. Both of the females leaped down gracefully from the back of that white crane, when suddenly Nolan said to Qin Wentian, “You smelly brat, Qingcheng has never taken her initiative to visit people. You must grab hold of this opportunity, you understand?”

“Er....” Qin Wentian blinked, only to see Mo Qingcheng glaring at Nolan, “You were the one that told me to come over to play!”

“Huh, what are you talking about? I don’t remember anything.” Nolan gazed at the skies, not intending to admit anything even if she died.

“Ignore her words.” Mo Qingcheng spoke and glanced at Qin Wentian. However, as she noticed Qin Wentian staring intensely at her, she quickly grew red. An expression of bashfulness could be seen in her eyes.

In the eyes of the Royal Capital’s elites, Mo Qingcheng was aloof and indifferent. After all, knowing that those who got close to her did so with motives, she would naturally not be happy.

However, in the end, she was just a simple and guileless girl. How could her heart truly be ice-cold? Thus, how could she stand against the intense stare of Qin Wentian's direct gaze? Naturally, the redness on her face could be explained.

For a moment, the atmosphere turned slightly weird, with a slight sense of love floating in the air. Nolan snickered, as she continued, "Do both of you need me to disappear?"

"...." Mo Qingcheng was completely speechless. If she had known, she wouldn't have brought Nolan out with her today.

AGM 149 - Danger

Mo Qingcheng was completely speechless.

Nolan was obviously intentionally causing trouble for her. Nolan giggled as she continued, “Fine, fine, fine. I will disappear right now.”

After saying this, Nolan shot a ‘you know I know’ look at Mo Qingcheng, as she smiled and glanced at Qin Wentian. “Hey you smelly brat, you better make good use of this opportunity. This chance only happens once in a blue moon. You don’t know how many people are secretly in love with this lass even though she is currently obsessed with someone right now.”

As the sound of her voice faded, Nolan laughed and departed, giving Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng the space they needed.

Her actions caused Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to become speechless.

Especially Nolan’s words. She was hinting at a possible romance.

This caused the atmosphere between the two of them to turn slightly awkward, as neither knew what to say in order to break the silence.

Qin Wentian stole a glance at Mo Qingcheng. That flawless jade-white skin, that full figure, that unmatched countenance, even her

every breath was capable of stirring the hearts of men. Unknowingly, Qin Wentian had already lost himself, staring at her in her beauty.

To a hot-blooded young man like him, the temptation of beauties was still a powerful force to be reckoned with. Especially the peerless beauty standing in front of him, not to mention the fact that she was nice to him as well.

At this moment, a thought involuntarily creep into Qin Wentian's heart. What if Mo Qingcheng really became his? How good would that be?

Lost in his thoughts, Qin Wentian was staring openly, lost in a state of entrancement.

Feeling Qin Wentian's gaze on her, Mo Qingcheng couldn't help but feel bashful, which only served to add to her beauty. Why was that fellow staring at her in this way? This caused Mo Qingcheng to stamp her foot as she pouted, "What are you looking at?"

"Er...." Qin Wentian blinked rapidly and recovered. It was only now that he realised he had been entranced. Smiling awkwardly, he continued, "Naturally, I'm looking at a pretty girl."

"Hmph." Mo Qingcheng lightly snorted, pouting in mock anger that further added a tinge of cuteness to her beauty.

"Oh and, you were too rash back then, which led you to suffer

from the underhanded methods of the Nine Mystical Palace. Since you had the capabilities to obtain first place, you should have told the Emperor Star Academy. Do you know how dangerous it was? Luckily, nothing happened.”

Mo Qingcheng’s tone was filled with a heavy sense of rebuke. This fellow was too reckless, causing everyone to perspire cold sweat in fear of something happening to him.

“I didn’t expect that for an entity as powerful as the Nine Mystical Palace would actually still resort to underhanded methods.” Qin Wentian smiled bitterly.

“Hmph, you can’t be this careless in the future. The Nine Mystical Palace’s objective was obviously to make Luo Qianqiu the champion. After seeing you preparing to destroy their carefully laid plans, of course they would use underhanded methods to deal with you.” Mo Qingcheng speechlessly explained. This fellow should have suffered a lot, but why was his thought process so simple?

But of course, since he hadn’t thought of the possibility that people would harm him, this could also prove that there was kindness to the point of stupidity in his heart. Although he was somewhat dumb, it was still rare to find someone like this.

If Qin Wentian was like Chu Tianjiao and Ye WuQue, intelligent but calculative and scheming, Mo Qingcheng wouldn’t have interacted so much with him.

For Mo Qingcheng, the sort of person she was reflected itself in the personalities of whom she chose to mingle with.

“Thank you, my beauty, for the reminder.” Qin Wentian teased. He would have to be more mindful in the future. If it were not for Gongyang Hong, he would surely have ended in dire straits. After all, Luo Qianqiu’s father had personally made a visit at the end of the confrontation.

The current him could only look up to an existence at the Heavenly Dipper Realm and gazed at him from afar. Qin Wentian could not forget Luo Tianya’s towering presence.

“I couldn’t tell that you are such a smooth talker.” Mo Qingcheng giggled as she gazed at Qin Wentian.

“Of course I am, if not there would be a certain someone referring to me as a dumbo again.” Qin Wentian shrugged as he laughed, causing Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes to flicker, and she too joined in the laughter.

So it turns out that this dumbo still remembered the snowy scenery from before. Mo Qingcheng didn’t know that no matter who was it that experienced the scenery with her, this would become an event the other party would never forget.

At this moment, footsteps could be heard approaching the courtyard.

Qin Wentian raised his head. He gazed over in that direction as he inquired, "Who's there?"

Nobody replied, but the sounds of the footsteps got nearer, causing Qin Wentian to frown. Usually, for those who came to his residence, they would let him know in advance unless the visitor had an exceptionally close relationship with Qin Wentian.

However, he currently only saw a figure wearing a conical bamboo head with his head lowered. A stranger who had no reason to be here in this place...there was something suspicious about this.

"Who are you?" The coldness in Qin Wentian's voice dropped by several degrees as he asked somewhat unhappily. This was his private residence. For those with a Emperor Jade Medallion that was the 4th level or above, they would all be allocated a residential courtyard for their own lodging.

"Be careful." Mo Qingcheng whispered. The stranger continued walking forwards, causing Qin Wentian to feel a sense of wrongness.

"I am..." The strange slowly spoke as he raised his head. Qin Wentian only saw a pair of sharp eyes glancing back at him. The rest of the stranger's features were obscured by a black cloth.

Abruptly, a surge of immense pressure and killing intent erupted forth from the body of the stranger and blasted straight at Qin Wentian.

“Your murderer.”

As the sound of the voice faded, the stranger stepped through the air and issued out a palm strike at Qin Wentian. This palm strike of his was actually the same innate technique that Qin Wentian cultivated, the Thousand Hand Imprint! As the palm struck out, countless palm shadows superimposed with an inexhaustible might.

Qin Wentian’s countenance froze as the ancient halberd appeared in his hands. Despite knowing that his opponent was a Yuanfu Realm expert, he unhesitatingly rushed forward instead of retreating because Mo Qingcheng was standing beside him.

“Get back.”

Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes flickered as her body shot forwards. Although Qin Wentian was a dumbo, under such circumstances, his reaction speed was astonishing. He slashed out with the ancient halberd, colliding with his opponent’s palm strike.

Qin Wentian was at the Arterial Circulation Realm, so regardless how strong his attacks might be, there was no way for him to match up to a Yuanfu Realm expert’s attack. As a thunderous sound rang out, the halberd was flung out of his hands. The impact forced his body backwards, causing him to relentlessly vomit blood. He smashed into a stone table which disintegrated into dust, giving a testament to the might contained within that palm strike.

At this moment, Mo Qingcheng's aura also exploded forth. She was actually emanating the pressure of a Yuanfu Cultivator, causing the masked man to be stunned for a moment. But that was all, a mere moment. He had to kill Qin Wentian in the shortest time possible or he would lose his chance.

The masked man stepped forwards as his killing intent rose to the limits, furiously sending out terrifying palm strikes in the direction of Mo Qingcheng. The palm shadows covered the skies as they blasted towards Mo Qingcheng, causing her five organs and six viseras to shudder violently as she was forced to retreat by his attacks, unable to block his path.

“Run, he has to kill you in a short period of time or he fails.” Mo Qingcheng screamed as though she wanted to warn the experts of the academy as well.

Qin Wentian knew Mo Qingcheng was right. He had never imagined that there would be someone assassinating him within the Emperor Star Academy. Ren Qianxing had also been too careless and only thought of protecting Qin Wentian when he was outside.

However, this only proved that his enemy was extremely intelligent. Not only that, they even had the power to actually bypass the security of the academy and infiltrated it.

Buzz. As a tornado ravaged past, Qin Wentian once again slashed out with his ancient halberd. However, he wasn't even to negate

the slightest impact of his opponent's blow. The Yuanfu masked man sent out another palm, knocking the halberd from Qin Wentian's grasp as he treaded the air, flying towards Qin Wentian.

Executing his Garuda Movement Technique, Qin Wentian's speed was so fast that he transformed into a blur of shadows leaving behind afterimages as he retreated. He only needed a little time. He knew that with him here, his opponent would not have the time to injure Mo Qingcheng. Qin Wentian just needed to delay.

“Who dares to be so impudent in the Emperor Star Academy?” A voice filled with intense rage rang out, shaking the entire space above the Emperor Star Academy. Hearing this, many eyes flickered. That Yuanfu cultivator, surely he wouldn't disregard his life just to kill Qin Wentian, right?

At his level, there was no way he would be willing to be someone else's death-warrior.

“Little White.” Mo Qingcheng could sense his intentions as she called out to the white crane. The white crane swoop down from the skies, its sharp claws targeting the masked man.

“SCRAM!” That masked man blasted out his palms. However, the white crane was a 7th grade demonic beast, which was also equivalent to a Yuanfu Cultivator. How could it be so easily dealt with?

The masked man let out roars of rage as he lost himself in fury,

continuously blasting out palm strikes. The white crane let out pitiful cries as it flopped downwards to the side. The masked man then continued lunging towards the direction which Qin Wentian was escaping to.

“There’s no more time.” Panic could be seen in his eyes. Gathering his terrifying strength, an extremely sharp aura akin to the presence of a sharp sword was blasted towards Qin Wentian, seemingly wanting to drive a hole through him.

“Get down!”

When her white crane was blocking the masked man earlier, Mo Qingcheng made use of this time to get closer to Qin Wentian. At this moment, her body dashed forwards, knocking down Qin Wentian as they fell flat on the ground while an instant later, the wind of that terrifying sword slash scraped their back.

“F*ck that.” That masked man had an extremely ugly expression in his eyes, and he once again sent out a palm strike. This time around, he didn’t linger to find out whether Qin Wentian was dead or alive, but rather turned and flew away with a speed as fast as lightning. If he were slower by even a little, he may have to leave his life behind.

As the sound of rumbling echoed, Qin Wentian only felt a surge of immense might blasting upon his body, causing him to spit out fresh blood. However, he had no time to care about his own injuries. In his mind, there was only the person lying atop his back.

“Qingcheng.”

Qin Wentian shouted. At this moment, his heart was lurching violently. He was actually terribly afraid.

A droplet of blood dripped down, falling beside Qin Wentian. This caused Qin Wentian to feel as though his heart was being stabbed by a thousand knives. Currently, he was truly afraid; this terror came right from his heart. His body shuddered violently, fearing his worst fears would come true.

“I’m fine.”

A light voice drifted out. The sound of this gentle voice in Qin Wentian’s ears was even more melodious than celestial music.

The load on his back suddenly lightened as she rolled down to the ground, coming to a stop beside him, her face directly in front of his.

That unmatched countenance was only an inch away, causing the breaths of people to stop. Looking at that haggardness of that pale face, as well as the trace of blood at the corner of her lips, Qin Wentian deeply felt that he had been useless.

“What a close call.” Mo Qingcheng smiled at Qin Wentian, but that smile almost caused his heart to shatter.

Who was it? Who was it that dared to assassinate him in the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy?

Qin Wentian was trembling with rage, as a towering killing intent surged in his heart.

Who exactly was it that wanted his death after the Jun Lin Banquet so badly that they are willing to pay any price?

Qin Wentian gingerly extended his trembling hands, as he lightly wiped the blood traces from the corner of her mouth. He laughed when he looked at her, but his heart was still just as cold as before.

“Are you really okay?” Qin Wentian asked in a low voice.

“Yes, don't worry, I still have some medicinal pills to aid me in my recovery.”

Mo Qingcheng withdrew a medicinal pill from her robes and she consumed it. After which, she smiled to Qin Wentian, “Are you able... to support me in getting up?”

After speaking, a faint tinge of red could be seen on that pale face of hers.

Qin Wentian nodded his head and supported Mo Qingcheng's body as she got up. “Recuperate well.”

“Okay.” Mo Qingcheng closed her eyes and started to channel and calm the Qi in her body.

At this moment, several silhouettes appeared in the surroundings. Some were flying about in the air trying to search for traces of that masked man while others were attending to the injuries of Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

“Who was it that had such guts?” Old Gu, upon looking at Mo Qingcheng’s injuries, felt a rage so intense that his anger could be felt by those standing near him.

“The masked man slipped away before we arrived, it was obvious he didn’t have time to assassinate Qin Wentian. If he had been slower by even one second, he wouldn’t have successfully escaped. However, in such a short time, there’s no way he could have escaped out of the academy under our eyes.” Standing in the middle of the air, Ren Qianxing had a grim expression on his face. He had been too careless.

He had considered Qin Wentian’s safety when he stepped out of the academy but never thought of a sneak attack in the grounds of their own academy.

“Are you saying that there’s a traitor in our Emperor Star Academy?” Old Gu’s gaze were as sharp as swords. His killing intent soared to its limits.

Qin Wentian’s killing intent also surged to its limits.

After fully displaying his talent on the stage of the Jun Lin Banquet, it seemed that there were truly many people who wanted him to die.

AGM 150 - Release Of Qin Chuan

In the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian's residence was currently extremely chaotic, as many elders were standing inside it.

Qin Wentian just only recently obtained the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet, but it appeared that plans to assassinate him were already in motion. To the Emperor Star Academy, this was something definitely forbidden. If they didn't find out the power behind it, there would still be similar incidents occurring in the future.

"Wentian, what techniques did the masked man use?" Old Gu halted his steps when he arrived next to Qin Wentian.

"The Thousand Hands Imprint. Not only that, during the last few strikes, he seemed to use a sword-type innate technique. But I feel that he was trying to cover up his identity, which was why he didn't dare to release his Astral Soul." Qin Wentian replied.

"Indeed." Old Gu nodded his head. The Thousand Hands Imprint was an innate technique that originated from the 5th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion and wasn't a forbidden technique. There were several within the academy who had the opportunity to cultivate it.

"Send men immediately to check with the Protector of the 5th level. I want to know who recently perused the manual for the Thousand Hands Imprint. For the past month, find out the names

of everyone who has done so.” Ren Qianxing stood in the middle of the air as he commanded. At this moment, he was extremely infuriated.

As some men departed to fulfil Ren’s order, there were also several Elders who soared up in the air at the same time. Their countenances were extremely unsightly as they asked, “There’s people who wanted to deal with Qin Wentian?”

“How brazen.”

As the Elders spoke out their displeasure one by one, Ren Qianxing coldly glanced at them. “All of you, who told you guys to converge here together?”

The Elders all froze in shock, as they noticed a cold pressure emanating from Ren Qianxing. Ren Qianxing was suspecting that the culprit was someone among them.

“The assassination this time around is no small matter, and everyone will be suspected. Not only that, I can confirmed that there’s a traitor within our academy. Although this matter may have nothing to do with you, the probability still exists. No matter how small the probability is, we have to investigate this matter clearly.”

Ren Qianxing’s words caused many to nod their heads in agreement as one of the Elders spoke. “Me and Yao Feng noticed the rest of the Elders rushing here. Knowing that something big happened, we decided to tag along to find out.”

Qin Wentian's gaze shifted to the person who spoke. This person was none other than Janus.

“There's hatred between Janus and me, he may be the one that wanted to kill me. However, this is the Emperor Star Academy. Surely he wouldn't take the risk and strike out during such a sensitive time.”

Qin Wentian was silently speculating. He could only say that there was a possibility that the traitor was Janus, despite the probability being miniscule.

Ren Qianxing went silent for a moment before stating, “During these two days, all Yuanfu cultivators in the academy have to pay a visit to the Disciplinary Committee and account for your movements today. I want to eliminate all probability that there's a traitor within our ranks. I hope that all of you can cooperate.”

Ren Qianxing's words caused the hearts of the Elders to involuntarily shudder. He wanted to interrogate the whole academy. And as for those at the Yuanfu Realm, their positions were all esteemed and high-up, but Ren Qianxing still wanted to do so. It seemed as though he wouldn't stop until he found out who the culprit was. This was sufficient enough to indicate how highly he regarded Qin Wentian.

“Okay, you all can go now.” After Ren Qianxing spoke, the crowd departed. He then turned and spoke to Qin Wentian, “Both of you, recuperate well. Leave this matter for me to handle.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded, as he sat down and regarded Mo Qingcheng. He was fine, but if Mo Qingcheng hadn’t been there for him earlier, he would surely have perished. Just thinking of this made his heart go cold.

As the pale countenance of the young lady before him gradually regained its color, Qin Wentian also relaxed. The medicinal strength of that pill from earlier was extremely shocking. No wonder powerful alchemists were even rarer compared to Divine Inscriptionists.

After several moments, once Mo Qingcheng’s countenance recovered its colour, Qin Wentian could see a red blush on both her cheeks. Looking at this caused his heart to beat slightly faster. What a heart-moving moment this was!

“If you continued to stare at her like this, she will never open her eyes.” Nolan spoke, it was unknown when she suddenly appeared.

As the sound of her voice faded, Mo Qingcheng opened her eyes. Her eyes were like limpid water as they regained their former brilliance. She rolled her eyes at Qin Wentian, but expressions of shyness could still be seen on her face.

“Don’t speak nonsense.” Mo Qingcheng rose and glared at Nolan, causing Qin Wentian, who was sitting by the side, to blink his eyes rapidly as he laughed. It seemed that Nolan’s words was accurate, Mo Qingcheng didn’t dare to open her eyes when he was staring at her.

“Little White, thank you..” Mo Qingcheng fed a medicinal pill to her white crane.

Qin Wentian stood up as he gazed at Mo Qingcheng’s departing back, only to see Mo Qingcheng turning, those gentle and intelligent eyes of hers smiling at him. There was no words of thanks being spoken between both of them. It wasn’t that they were too formal, but that mere words of thanks were insufficient to express their feelings.

“There won’t be something like this happening again. Next time, I will protect you.” Qin Wentian blurted out, causing Mo Qingcheng to blink her eyes as she grew red. She hurriedly exclaimed, “Who needs your protection?”

After which, she mounted the white crane. “Little White, we’re leaving.”

Nolan also mounted the white crane and smiled at Qin Wentian, “Good good, your skin is becoming thicker.”

The white crane soared to the skies, and both of the young ladies disappeared in the horizon. Qin Wentian gazed at the empty skies when he suddenly laughed. The words Mo Qingcheng said earlier seemed as though there were hints of romance hidden within.

Not only that, Mo Qingcheng was a Yuanfu Realm existence. As of now, how could he even protect her?

As he thought of this, Qin Wentian silently turned and began his cultivation.

The desire to get stronger grew increasingly stronger and stronger.

In the depths of the Dark Forest, silence reigned around the Black Stronghold. The Black Stronghold was situated in a land of desolation, in a place where everyone had forgotten about it.

Within the Black Stronghold, there were numerous cells forged from hardened ice steel. And in these cells, one could see living prisoners locked up within.

This was a prison forged from ice steel. In there, there was only Yin Qi. The only sounds that sounded were the footsteps on the ice paths that ran through the middle of all the cells as the echos of the footsteps bounced off the walls.

“Qin Chuan.”

Abruptly, a cold voice called out. In one of the cells, Qin Chuan opened his eyes, revealing a cloudy light. Stroking his untidy beard, he looked at the silhouette standing outside the cells. Surely he wasn't delivering food again?

He heard the sounds of the metallic chains being unlocked. This caused a cold light to flicker in Qin Chuan's eyes. What tricks did they intend to play? Sending someone to unlock his chains? There should be something suspicious going on.

“You can go.”

“Go? Where?” Qin Chuan coldly inquired.

“You are free to go.” That person didn't reply, causing Qin Chuan to furrow his brows as he was led out of the prison.

The person led Qin Chuan outside, after which another prison warden locked the gates of the prison and coldly snorted, “What a lucky bastard. That adopted godson of his actually got the first place in the Jun Lin Banquet.”

Soon after, the doors of the Black Stronghold slammed shut.

At this moment, in the ice prison, a pitiful figure lying on the floor trembled slightly before opening his eyes. Hidden in the cloudy eyes of his, one could see an intent that was as sharp as swords.

This person was naturally Qin Wu, the father of Qin Chuan.

Outside the Black Stronghold, Qin Chuan breathed in the fresh air and felt the wetness of the morning air while a bewildered expression appeared on his face.

At this moment, all chains on him had already been unlocked. Not only that, the two other people beside him weren't even powerful enough to be considered guards.

The words 'You are free to go' resounded in his ears as disbelief was still apparent in his eyes.

Was this a trap?

After standing there for a long moment, Qin Chuan opened his mouth again and asked, "Where are you bringing me to?"

"To the Royal Capital. Let's go." One of the two figures spoke. They stepped into the Dark Forest.

The sunlight gradually warmed the surroundings, as Qin Chuan and the rest followed the path and walked out of the Dark Forest. Finally, he walked out of that icy prison, and now he that he was out, seeing humans and buildings everywhere, the oppressive feelings in his heart also lightened somewhat.

All this, however, wasn't that important to him because Qin Chuan currently saw two familiar silhouettes standing there waiting for him.

"Father," Qin Yao's tears dripped down her face as she rushed over, burying her head in Qin Chuan's bosom.

Qin Wentian also walked to Qin Chuan's side as he called out, "Father."

"Yao`er, Wentian, what's going on?" A lack of comprehension could be seen on Qin Chuan's face.

Qin Yao shifted her head away from the bosom of Qin Chuan. A radiant smile could be seen on her face. "Father, it's Wentian. He became the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet. At this moment, not only the Emperor Star Academy and the Divine Weapon Pavilion support him, but there's also a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign that's fond of him, forcing the 3rd Prince Chu Tianjiao to release you."

"Champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, support of the Emperor Star Academy and Divine Weapon Pavilion, and a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign?!" Qin Chuan was stunned. After a long moment, he glanced at Qin Wentian as he raised his head, drawing in a deep breath. In his eyes, the light of hot tears could be seen flickering within.

Walking forwards, Qin Chuan embraced Qin Wentian in a hug, his tears finally overflowing.

"Countless people said my son wasn't able to cultivate. But I, Qin Chuan, have always believed that when my son finally explodes forth with his radiance, he would be like a star, far up in the Heavens as others gazed at him in wonder."

Qin Chuan's voice was filled with indescribable emotions. What else could he wish for with a son like this?

Although they weren't related by blood, the bonds between them were even closer than that of a real parent and child.

“Champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, I think Autumn Snow isn't even worthy enough to carry my son's shoes anymore.” Qin Chuan had always remembered the words and actions of the Bai Clan from back then.

“Father, when Wentian obtained the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet. Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow was there as well. Autumn Snow didn't even have the qualifications to participate in the banquet and could only look up to Qin Wentian from afar.” Qin Yao laughed.

“Father, everything is finally over.” Qin Wentian drew in a huge breath.

“Yeah, let's walk while we talk.” Qin Yao smiled.

The guards standing by the side of Qin Chuan turned and departed, and as for the Yuanfu cultivators who accompanied Qin Wentian to this meetup point, they all nodded their heads as they saw Qin Chuan.

“These seniors are the Yuanfu Elders from the Emperor Star Academy who are here to protect Wentian.” Qin Yao explained, causing Qin Chuan to freeze in shock. From this, one could see how important Qin Wentian was to the academy; he actually required an entourage of Yuanfu-level guards just for merely going out of

the academy.

The child from before had already grown up, which caused him to feel gratified in his heart.

In the Royal Palace, within a luxurious room, Chu Tianjiao sat on the ground, his gaze respectfully riveted in the direction of the Dragon Couch in front of him.

On the Dragon Couch, a feeble old man with a pale countenance was lying there.

“Father, your son is useless, powerless to help you despite your condition getting more severe.” Chu Tianjiao guiltily exclaimed.

“It’s not your fault I might pass away at any time. Tomorrow, I’m going to meet with our Ancestor. And as for the future of Chu, I will pass it into your hands.” The silhouette lying atop the couch quietly stated.

“Is Ancestor still around?” Chu Tianjiao asked.

“Naturally. But, only the Emperor is able to enter the Dragon Pool Chamber. This is the rule set by our family. After you succeed the position, you can also pay a visit to Ancestor. Although our Ancestor doesn’t care much about worldly affairs, he wouldn’t ignore if the Chu Clan was in a crisis.”

“And if you have the time, help me educate your eldest brother. Although he caused me disappointment, after all, the blood of our Chu Clan still flows in his veins.” That silhouette sighed again. Although many in Chu looked down on and disregarded the Eldest Prince, the aged figure knew how outstanding his eldest son truly was.

AGM 151 - A Brewing Storm

Chu Tianjiao left the room his father was in. All the citizens in Chu had no idea that the Emperor of Chu was tormented by illnesses and was always in bed. Even top-grade medicinal pills had no effect on curing the illness.

The Emperor of Chu could still remember that this illness began when Qin Wu passed away. It gradually worsened until its current state.

Chu Tianjiao stood outside a grand hall. Standing upright and attentively on both side of the entrance were a few Blooded Imperial bodyguards who resembled unmoving statues.

“The first task, gather 10 Yuanfu-level Dragon Guards. From today onwards, no one is allowed to get near to my lord father. Remember, no one is allowed. No one.”

“The second task, relay my command on the front lines, implement the beheading plan.”

“The third task, inform the Black Stronghold to strengthen their defenses and send people to monitor Qin Wu. Under no circumstances will he be allowed to break out.”

“The fourth task, send people to monitor the clans that hold military authority in the Royal Capital. If their families shows any signs of strange movements, control them immediately, or annihilate all of them.”

“The fifth task...” Chu Tianjiao went silent for a moment before he continued. “Forget it, I will head over myself personally to negotiate things with the Nine Mystical Palace.”

This time around, the position of the first ranker had been snatched by the Emperor Star Academy, but the Nine Mystical Palace would surely not let their plans die away.

And thus, this should be the time to erode this troublesome academy from Chu. Luo Tianya and Luo Qianqiu would surely be sending people to aid him with this task.

The statue-like guards disappeared without a sound as they left to execute Chu Tianjiao’s order. It was as though they were never there in the first place.

Chu Tianjiao turned his head. He gazed at the depths of the great hall, nodding in satisfaction as he stared at that heavily guarded room. He didn’t believe that there would be anyone able to infiltrate it.

After an unknown amount of time passed since Chu Tianjiao gave his order, the Chu Country was like a machine that got automated. The biggest transport company, the Sky Transport Network, also got livelier.

During the same time Chu Tianjiao relayed his commands, in the depths of the Dark Forest, that silent and dark prison was still as cold and rigid as before as if it had always been there since ancient

times.

A horse carriage arrived outside the Black Stronghold, as a figure within took out an authority medallion. Soon after, the gates of the Black Stronghold opened, and a line of silhouettes walked out slowly and entered the Black Stronghold.

This line of unknown figures stopped outside the cell of a certain someone. The prisoner within the cell was sitting on the ground. This prisoner was none other than Qin Wu.

“Open the door.” The person holding the authority medallion coldly stated.

The prison warden stared at the figure, and after some moments of hesitation, he complied and reached for his key, unlocking the door of the cell.

The figure with the authority medallion continued in an icy voice. “Unlock his chains.”

“Impossible.” The prison warden refuted. There was no one who had that level of authority.

Puchi! Even before the sound of his voice faded, a long spear entered him from behind, piercing right into his heart while a hand from an unknown figure pressed against his mouth, stifling his death cries. The prison warden slumped to the ground before closing his eyes forever.

The figure with the medallion searched the corpse for the key, and he unlocked the chains that bound Qin Wu, as well as removing the torn and tattered robes Qin Wu wore.

Qin Wu still had his eyes closed as he stood up slowly. After which, one of the unknown figures took out a set of new clothings and put it on Qin Wu's body, as if they were doing something that was exceedingly ordinary.

“Prison break!”

Abruptly, sounds of alarm rang out from the patrolling guards. The group of unknown figures also started to move, with killing intent rolling off in waves from their bodies.

Qin Wu's eyes finally opened. In them, there were no sharp glints of light. On the contrary, extraordinary calmness could be seen within.

“Is everything already prepared?” Qin Wu asked.

“Not yet.” That figure replied. However, there was no fluctuations in Qin Wu's countenance. It was as though everything was within his predictions.

“After young master Qin Chuan was rescued and the line of equilibrium broke, Chu Tianjiao already made his move. If we don't take actions fast, Chu Tianjiao may silence esteemed General

at any moment. Without a choice, we could only bring forward our plan,” that person replied. Even after all these years, he still referred to Qin Wu as ‘General’.

“In the end, do we still really have to make an enemy out of Chu?” Qin Wu sighed.

“From the moment the Wu King passed away, everything was already determined. The twelve generals all swore to avenge the Wu King’s death, and after the next generations of the generals’ bloodlines grew up, they, too, swore the blood oath. It’s all because General has always been enduring silently and not giving the final command. My father as well as a few other uncles could only use the guise of retreating as a form of advancement, building up their forces in secret and beginning the long and endless wait.

That figure whispered in a low voice, but the words he uttered were filled with a sense of heaviness.

It was as though there was a great secret behind the death of the Wu King.

Once, the Wu King shook the world, aided the previous Emperor to conquer the world, and subjugated the enemy forces in all directions.

However, when the hares were all killed, the hounds would be stewed and eaten.

This piece of history was only known to the generals who stood in the front lines during the times of war.

And as for the citizens of Chu, the truth was distorted before it reached their ears.

No one knew the truth of what had happened. This piece of history, although seemingly quiet on the surface, actually had a violent storm brewing within.

Outside the Black Stronghold, a typhoon of killing intent erupted. A mysterious group of soldiers entered. These troops were all covered entirely in metal, with helmets obscuring their features. The strength of their might was terrifying to an inconceivable degree. These were all shock troops, the elites among elites.

Back when the Wu King had passed away and the Qin Residence relocated to Sky Harmony City, these elite soldiers no longer reported to the Qin Residence, and instead they scattered to the four winds.

Chu Tianjiao naturally knew of these matters. With how prosperous the Chu Country was, its informant network's ability was also extremely powerful.

And thus, Chu Tianjiao didn't have the intentions to kill Qin Wu and Qin Chuan, because he could almost be certain that if Qin Wu were to die, the Chu Country would be embroiled in the center of a terrifying tornado. The might of the hidden power in darkness was

sufficient to overthrow their imperial authority.

Chu Tianjiao didn't make a move, Qin Wu also mirrored his actions, which caused a fragile line of equilibrium to be born.

But after events of the Jun Lin Banquet, a gap was pried open in this fragile line of equilibrium, causing the balance between both parties to tilt. Hence, Chu Tianjiao decided to not wait any longer.

Today, the messengers of the Sky Transport Network secretly delivered intelligence to various places in Chu. Not only that, they even stepped into the boundaries of other countries.

It was as though there was going to be a terrifying storm that would happen in Chu very soon.

And in regards to all that was happening, only a privileged few in Chu had any inkling about it. The majority of the citizens still lived their own lives, with no knowledge of what was going to happen.

Even Qin Chuan didn't know about this.

Qin Wu had never mentioned this to him before.

It was the same for Qin He and Qin Ye, who were fighting at the front lines.

Qin Wentian, was naturally in the dark as well.

In his heart, grandpa Qin was a gentle and mild person who didn't even have any slight hints of resemblance to those generals that had experienced countless wars.

To him, Qin Wu loved peace and solitude and had amicable personality. Other than this, there wasn't any other impressions Qin Wentian could remember about Qin Wu.

AGM 152 – Warbeast Index

A day had passed since the event of Qin Wentian's assassination. Although the Emperor Star Academy was still on their guard, the earlier restrictions and lockdown had been removed as people were once again able to enter and depart freely.

Janus walked out of the academy as he strolled slowly on the streets outside. That reserved and calm gaze of his betrayed none of his emotions, no one knew what he was thinking.

The investigations conducted by the Emperor Star Academy were too terrifying with regards to Qin Wentian's assassination. All Yuanfu Cultivators had to make known their movements on that day of assassination and had to have at least three other witnesses that could verify their statement.

With such a stringent method, those with no grounds for suspicion would be struck off the checklist. It was only a matter of time before the truth would be out.

However at this moment, Janus seemed as though he was worried about something. His brows were tightly knotted as he muttered to himself.

Suddenly, his footsteps halted and his aura instantly blasted out along with the release of his Astral Souls.

Pstt. At the side of him, a spear akin to a sinister, venomous snake erupted forth with a speed as quick as lightning.

Janus roared in rage as a terrifying hurricane enveloped his body. He continually blasted out with his palms, blocking the tyrannical attack of the spear user.

After which, several Yuanfu Cultivators appeared around him. All of them were cloaked in black and had their features obscured by masks. The killing intent they emitted was readily apparent as they strode towards Janus.

Not a single word was spoken. It was as if they had come for the death of Janus.

These happenings caused the countenance of Janus to turn extremely ugly as he shouted in anger, “What? Do you all intend to silence me by killing?”

As the sound of his voice faded, Janus discovered that the black robed Yuanfu Cultivators had stopped their movements. This scenario caused Janus to tremble in fear, as his countenance turned pale white.

He realised that he had just said the wrong thing.

Indeed, the Yuanfu Cultivators all removed their masks and revealed their true faces. Upon seeing them, the face of Janus, instantly turned black.

“Wh...what are all of you doing?”

Those that appeared were actually Yuanfu experts from the Emperor Star Academy.

Very obviously, Janus had fallen into the trap.

“Elder Janus, there’s no need for you to continue acting any longer.” In front of Janus, Elder Thousand-Hand appeared. His gaze were as cold as ice as he continued, “The investigations showed that you were one of the most suspicious among all the Yuanfu Cultivators. And indeed as expected, you fell into the trap. Janus, who was the one that directed you?”

Since Janus had said out the words ‘What? Do you all intend to silence me by killing,’ it was already sufficient to prove that there was someone behind him that also wanted to kill Qin Wentian.

Although Janus hated Qin Wentian, the grudge between them wasn’t sufficient for Janus to take such a huge risk. Before he undertook the assassination attempt he already knew that if he was successful, everything would be worth it. By then, he would leave the Emperor Star Academy and depart from Chu.

What a pity, he had failed.

“Who do you think had the capability to make me work for him?” Janus coldly smiled.

Thousand-Hand frowned. Janus’ words seemed like they were

hinting that Chu Tianjiao may be the one behind this whole thing.

But Thousand-Hand still had some suspicions regarding the truth of his words.

A cold light glinted in his eyes as he stared at Janus. He knew that it would be extremely hard to pry any information from Janus.

“Killing a genius of the academy despite your status as an elder, your crime is worthy of death.” Thousand-Hand coldly announced. “Execute him now.”

As the sound of his voice rang out, intense killing intent gushed out from the surrounding Yuanfu experts.

“Thousand-Hand, you actually didn’t even pause to consider my contributions to the academy. At the very least, I’m still an elder and have toiled for many years. How can you announce my death just like this?” Janus shouted, full of unwillingness, as the expression on his face turned extremely ugly. He had never expected Thousand-Hand to be so ruthless.

However, how could Thousand-Hand still be bothered about him? Turning, with his back facing Janus, he walked in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy while sounds of battle could be heard behind him.

And after a few short moments, a corpse laid quietly on the

pathways of the Royal Capital. A person standing beside the corpse commanded, “Give him a decent burial. No matter what, he’s still an elder of our academy.”

The death of Janus was just an extremely minor matter in the whole scheme of things. It was only capable of causing a small wave to ripple through the Emperor Star Academy.

But in reality, his death set many things into motion. The Emperor Star Academy had made their stance clear by their actions. Not only that, they were still relentlessly exhausting their resources in a bid to find out who the mastermind behind this was.

Qin Wentian was thunderstruck when news of Janus’ death reached him. That elder who always made things difficult for him had actually died so silently. Not only that, the assassin was him.

Qin Wentian naturally wouldn’t feel pity for Janus. In that assassination attempt, Janus had almost killed him and severely injured Mo Qingcheng.

That droplet of blood followed by the radiant smile on that countenance of peerless beauty was something Qin Wentian would never be able to forget.

At this moment, within the Emperor Star Academy.

In front of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, Qin Wentian inclined his head as he studied the majestic building before him.

The Heavenly Star Pavilion was separated into nine levels. The higher the level, the more narrow the space was, and for the number of people that had stepped onto the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, they could be counted on a single hand.

Even elders of the academy did not have the authority. And if one wanted to use Yuan Meteor Stones to raise the level of their Jade Medallion, the amount of stones needed was so astronomical that it was an impossibility.

And thus, it was as if the entrance to the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was solely prepared for the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet.

At this moment, Qin Wentian took a step forwards and entered the pavilion.

After he obtained the number one position in the banquet, the level of his Emperor Jade Medallion was upgraded to the 7th grade.

Before he stepped onto the 7th level, Qin Wentian chose to stop on the 6th level first. Over on the 6th level were the best Yuanfu-level cultivation arts and supreme top-level earth-graded innate techniques.

Qin Wentian was here only for one purpose: he wanted the Yuanfu-level Index of the Garuda Movement Technique. After he found it, he borrowed it and placed it inside his interspatial ring. As for the other innate techniques, Qin Wentian didn't bother to

even look at them. Because for his other innate techniques, he hadn't even mastered them to their peak of perfection yet. It was meaningless for him to spend time to gain more insights into other types of innate techniques.

Although the grade of an innate technique correlated with the level of power it possessed, the higher the grade, the stronger the innate technique, it was still meaningless if one didn't have the ability to control the power. On the contrary, it might even backfire.

One example was his Great Dream Halberd Art. Although the grade of it wasn't that high, but because he was the one who created it, the level of power it contained and the might displayed when Qin Wentian unleashed it were exceedingly high.

As he walked up the stairs situated on the 6th level, at the top of the stairs, Qin Wentian saw an old man who was quietly sitting there. The body of the old man was covered in dust, and even his hair had become a silvery-grey colour. It was unknown how many years he had already been sitting there.

“Senior.” Qin Wentian called out.

“You may proceed.” It was as if the old man recognised Qin Wentian, as he spoke in a low voice.

Qin Wentian didn't say anything else and bowed to the old man. The 7th level was forbidden, and there would surely be those of the younger generations who coveted access to it. Thus, the protector

here would undoubtedly be one of the supreme experts of the academy.

And after Qin Wentian arrived on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he saw a bookshelf that was filled with many Indexes of cultivation arts and innate techniques.

Other than the bookshelf, in the other direction there were three other entrances. And above these three entrances, from left to right the words 7th, 8th and 9th were engraved atop the entrances respectively.

It was as though these three entrances on this level represented the 7th, 8th and 9th levels of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

It was as though this level was the limit, there wasn't any other way to proceed upwards.

As for this mysterious 7th level, Qin Wentian had speculated and had many conjectures regarding it, but who would have thought that it would be so simple.

Three entrances and a single bookshelf.

Qin Wentian firstly went to the bookshelf for a look. After a short moment, his heart trembled with indescribable emotions. These were all Heavenly Dipper level Cultivation Arts, and any single one of them appearing was sufficient to shake the entire Chu Country.

And other than this cultivation arts, Qin Wentian noticed a

volume slot beside them. On the surface of the volume, a few large font words were inscribed.

“Warbeast Index.”

Qin Wentian flipped it open, and very quickly, he was engrossed by the contents written inside.

“In the Nine Heavenly Layers, there were countless Martial Constellations. Each of these constellations had its own merits. Powerhouses would use stronger constellations while weaker powers would use more inferior constellations. However, there was clearly a line of division between the different types of Martial Constellations. The Venerate Heaven Sect once gathered countless peerless existences of the Grand Xia Empire that had condensed Beast-types Astral Souls before. Out of those, they selected the most powerful 360 types of Beast-types Astral Souls to be recorded into the Warbeast Index, ranking the Astral Souls respectively.”

This paragraph was the primer, and was also the reason why the Warbeast Index was created.

“Venerate Heaven Sect, Grand Xia Empire.”

Qin Wentian murmured. The Venerate Heaven Sect should be an exceptionally powerful sect while the Grand Xia Empire should similarly be a place of unimaginable might.

Not only that, ever since he was young, Qin Wentian had been

under the tutelage of Uncle Black. He was exceedingly familiar with and had even analysed the constellations of the 5th Heavenly Layer and below. Naturally he knew that the power of the Stellar Martial Cultivators directly depended on the type and might of their condensed Astral Souls which hailed from the Martial Constellations.

But Uncle Black had never once grouped the Astral Souls together in their respective types and had not specially told him to study beast-type Astral Souls, and their individual rankings.

Qin Wentian flipped the Warbeast Index open. The pages were filled with pictures as well as text.

“Double Winged Horned Python, ranked number 360. Martial Constellation located in the 4th Heavenly Layer. Those that condensed an Astral soul from it would gain tremendous boost in their agility, as well as a tyrannical increase in both defense and attack. The increment in stats from the Astral Soul could said to be extremely balanced, with no apparent weakness.

“Skyember Demonic Lion Astral Soul, also at the 360th rank. This constellation resides in the 4th Heavenly Layer, and Stellar Martial Cultivators that condensed an Astral Soul from it would have a reduction in speed. However, their attacks would be strengthened to an inconceivable degree while their defense would be upgraded too.”

The Skyember Demonic Astral Soul was slightly stronger compared to the Double Winged Horned Python, the advantages it had in attack power, mitigated the slight deficiency in speed.

“To think that the descriptions were all detailed to this extent.”

Qin Wentian slowly flipped the pages. He already had a great deal of knowledge regarding Astral Souls, but if one wanted to write a Index like this, knowledge alone was insufficient. One still needed to update the index periodically as there were new and stronger constellations being discovered every now and then.

Qin Wentian was somewhat bewildered. Why would an index like this appear on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?

AGM 153 – Azure Emperor Palace

Qin Wentian detailedly flipped through and read the pages of the Warbeast Index, awe appeared in his heart as he studied and memorised them.

After he finished reading the Warbeast Index, he took up another extremely thin piece of paper at the side as he studied the words inscribed upon it.

“For the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, behind that entrance, there’s one of the 18 testing grounds of the Grand Xia Empire – the Spirit Beast testing grounds. For those below Yuanfu, you have a single chance to enter within. If you die in there, you lose the opportunity to take the test again. For those that manage to obtain a Beast Spirit that’s ranked with the top 10 rankings, they are eligible to enter the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.”

The strokes of the written words were all bold and strong, containing a graceful yet imposing aura. It should have been something written by an almighty expert from the past.

This paragraph was also signed off by a certain person. The Azure Emperor.

“The founder of the Emperor Star Academy, the Azure Emperor.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled violently. These instructions were actually left behind by the founder of the academy.

Then doesn't that meant that the Heavenly Star Pavilion was also his creation?

"The first entrance should be referring to the one on the left." Qin Wentian gazed at the number '7' inscribed on top of the entrance.

He could never have imagined that the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was actually an entrance.

"One of the 18 testing grounds of Grand Xia Empire, the Spirit Beast testing grounds." Qin Wentian strode forwards in the direction of the entrance and extended his palms, placing them on the door of the entrance as a bright glow of light burst into life.

After the door was opened, right in front of Qin Wentian was a prayer mat. And on the top of the prayer mat were inscriptions of complex runic lines, as though it was some sort of mysterious Divine Imprint.

Qin Wentian walked in and then sat down cross-leggedly on the top of the prayer mat. An instant later, the door of the entrance slammed shut as the runic lines revolved about, giving birth to a blinding light that shrouded Qin Wentian's body within. He felt as though his consciousness was being forcibly pulled out. This feeling was extremely uncomfortable, but he continued enduring it.

"What is this exactly?" Qin Wentian felt as though his

consciousness had already left his body. He had no way to control any part of his body, and this kind of feeling without the freedom to act independently was almost an unbearable agony.

Buzz! His body abruptly sank down. Qin Wentian finally felt his body responding to the will of his consciousness. But when he finally came to his senses, he couldn't help but be dumbfounded as he studied his surroundings.

“Is this the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” Qin Wentian raised his arms as he looked at his hands. This place was akin to reality, but his body had never once moved after he went through the entrance.

Or was this place similar to the Skydream Forest, a dreamscape?

However at this moment, he felt that the reality here was many times more real compared to that of a dreamscape, it was as though his real body had been transported here.

He was certain that this was his true body, it wasn't a dream, nor an illusion.

Qin Wentian was standing in a vast expanse of flatland, and around him there were also several other people. They also instantly discovered the presence of Qin Wentian as their gazes swiftly shifted onto him. Expressions of bewilderment appeared on their faces.

Why was there one more unknown person appearing inside the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?

Qin Wentian also naturally discovered the presence of the crowd. These people here were all youths, about 17-18 years of age on average. For those that were younger, they were about 15-16 while for those that were older they were about 19-20.

Not only that, they obviously belonged to different camps of people. The leaders of each camp gave off an extraordinary air. Even Qin Wentian could feel a sense of danger emanating forth from the leaders.

This caused Qin Wentian to speculate – by entering the Spirit Beast Testing Ground via the Entrance of the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, he had come into contact with others that were from outside of Chu.

“We agreed to meet here. Everyone belonging to the different powers have arrived right?”

A youthful-looking cultivator spoke. This youth was extremely handsome and was about 17-18 years of age. His long hair had a slight curl to it, and a bewitching light seemed to glint in his eyes.

“I think everyone has arrived.” Another youth lightly replied, gazing at Qin Wentian with an expression of interest.

In the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, those that were powerful enough to obtain the qualifications were all already here.

But then why were there someone extra? Who the hell was he?

This scenario caused many to feel extremely interested.

“Oi.”

A voice drifted over. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze in the direction of the voice and he saw a beautiful young lady looking straight at him.

This lady appeared to be of a similar age to him. Her robes bespoke that she had an extremely high status. The light smile on her face gave off a slight sense of seduction.

Elegant and beautiful, this was what Qin Wentian felt.

“What’s your name and where are you from?” The girl smiled as she curiously inquired.

“Is this place the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” Qin Wentian didn’t reply but asked a question of his own instead.

“Aikk, you actually knew that this place was the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds?” A glow of amazement flashed past the eyes of the girl as she continued laughing, “According to what I know, those with the qualifications to enter this place are all already here. But... who are you? Where did you come from?”

“Chu Country.” Qin Wentian replied. He wanted to know if these people knew of the existence of Chu.

“Huh? What is Chu?” Bewilderment was reflected on the countenance of the girl.

“Have any of you heard of that place before?” She turned and gazed at the others, but no one knew.

Very obviously, to them the Chu Country was too insignificant.

“Do you all know the Nine Mystical Palace?” Qin Wentian added. The Nine Mystical Palace was the controller of Chu and surely would be considered a powerhouse of sorts at the very least.

“You are from the Nine Mystical Palace?” The girl giggled as she looked at Qin Wentian. “Don’t lie to me! Those from the Nine Mystical Palace wouldn’t even have the qualifications to step inside here.”

Qin Wentian’s heart trembled with shock as he heard her reply. With the power of the Nine Mystical Palace, they actually didn’t even have the qualifications to step inside this place? If that was the case, then what was the background of the other cultivators here? Was their background even more tyrannical compared to the Nine Mystical Palace?

“Cut the crap, kill him.”

At this moment, the handsome youth from before interrupted. His gaze was filled with total disregard for Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian's appearance merely caused him to be slightly curious, but since Qin Wentian had no answers for them, there was no need to waste any more time.

After the sound of his words faded, behind him, another youth walked out. This youth similarly gave off a demonic presence as he lunged towards Qin Wentian.

Boom. A multitude of fist lights exploded out. Qin Wentian felt a surge of Demonic Qi gushing over. It was as though a flood dragon had rushed out of the oceans, wanting to devour him.

A cold light glinted in Qin Wentian's eyes. Lifting his palms, he abruptly sent out the 3rd Stance of the Thousand-Hands Imprint, the Forgotten Imprint, smashing apart the pressure emitted by his opponent's attack.

“DIE.” His opponent stabbed forth with a finger akin to a sharp sword, aiming for the head of Qin Wentian. This finger attack was as quick as lightning and struck out with the force of a thunderbolt.

With a twist of his body, the footwork of Qin Wentian was marvelous to an inconceivable extent. After avoiding the attack of his opponent, he executed the Falling Mountain Palms and a manifestation of a mountain peak heavily slammed downwards.

ROAR. His opponent bellowed, the force of that roar was akin to the roar of a flood dragon, and almost burst Qin Wentian's eardrums.

An exceptionally cold ray of light flickered in Qin Wentian's eyes. With a stomp onto the ground, his body flickered as he transformed into a blur of shadows.

Qin Wentian's eyes were closed and he gave off a mysterious feeling. Piercing out with his finger, his finger attack was akin to a strike by an ancient halberd, piercing right through the middle of his opponent's eyebrows. All this occurred in an instant. His opponent froze in mid-motion, and after which, the corpse slumped down upon the ground.

This battle was extremely short-lived. Qin Wentian slew a person in an instant, but the gazes of the crowd didn't change. It was as though they were watching a play.

Qin Wentian could also not confirm whether the death in this place was true death. But this place was indeed many times more realistic when compared to the Skydream Forest. It didn't seem to be in a dreamscape.

And although he swiftly killed his opponent, he knew that the dead guy undoubtedly had the power to fight for one of the top nine rankings if he participated in the Jun Lin Banquet.

Just a random lackey already possess strength of this level. How could Qin Wentian not be shocked.

“Interesting.” The girl laughed as she saw what happened, before turning her gaze onto that handsome youth from before.

A cold light flashed in the eyes of the handsome youth. All of a sudden, his silhouette disappeared from its original spot. Qin Wentian only felt a demonic ray of light flying rapidly towards him. His opponent had his palms extended and wavering slightly. An instant later, Qin Wentian felt as though his body was bound by the filaments of demonic light rays, causing him to be powerless, unable to even move a muscle.

“Break.” The Divine Yuan in Qin Wentian’s body surged as the filaments of demonic lights were extinguished. He took a step forward as his aura frenziedly soared upwards.

However, the handsome-looking youth seemed as though he wasn’t the slightest bit affected by it. A spirit-type Astral Soul that was akin to a specter continued closing in the distance as it gently sent out a palm.

Qin Wentian retaliated with his Falling Mountain Palms. As both palm strikes collided together, the slightly thin figure of that handsome-looking youth actually didn’t even waver in the slightest. Qin Wentian could feel a mysterious surge of energy gushing out from his opponent’s palms, rushing right into his body. It was as though that mysterious energy wanted to destroy his meridians from within and even attack his heart.

“What, his attack could ignore my retaliation attack and defense?” Qin Wentian froze as the Divine Energy in his body surged. The Mountain-Type Divine Energy in his body flowed

towards the mysterious energy, acting as a barrier and successfully dissipated it. Qin Wentian's heart trembled and he retreated continuously.

Within his body, an extremely unbearable feeling appeared. Qin Wentian stared at the handsome-looking youth, only to see that his opponent's countenance was as normal as before, without the slightest hint of disturbance.

“How powerful.” Qin Wentian silently exclaimed as he cast a glance at the surrounding cultivators. Were their strength all this terrifying?

If their background was from some places even mightier than the Nine Mystical Palace, it wasn't surprising that the handsome-looking youth had a level of power even stronger than Luo Qianqiu.

The handsome-looking youth involuntarily furrowed his brows as an expression of puzzlement appeared on his face when he saw that Qin Wentian was actually still standing, with no signs of much damage taken.

How incredible, there was actually someone at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation able to receive one of his strikes without dying.

His body once again strode forwards to Qin Wentian. His palms gently extended outwards, appearing soft and weak, devoid of any strength.

Qin Wentian's ancient halberd abruptly appeared in his hands. With a shift in his steps and a speed as fast as lightning, he executed Mountain Splitter, advancing forwards with all his might.

The steps of the handsome youth suddenly stopped, and as the ancient halberd slashed out, the continual attacks caused his body to unceasingly retreat, as killing intent crazily gushed out of his body.

“F*CK OFF.”

The ancient halberd was flung out of Qin Wentian's hands as the handsome youth successfully evaded. The halberd was stabbed directly into the ground. Qin Wentian didn't choose to retrieve it, but instead, he turned and left with incredible speed.

His movements were akin to that of a Garuda, disappearing in the blink of an eye. The purpose for him coming here was to obtain the spirits of warbeasts.

“The Nine Heavenly Garuda Movement Technique?” The girl from earlier exclaimed in shock, and the countenance of the handsome youth also stiffened. Their gazes were all riveted on a line of youths standing at the side.

“Is he someone from your Azure Emperor Palace?” The handsome youth coldly inquired.

“No, I do not know of such a person.” Someone among the group replied.

“How interesting this matter has become. Other than those from the Azure Emperor Palace, how could there still be others that cultivate this Garuda Movement Technique – the movement technique that enabled the Azure Emperor to hail winds and command clouds back in his days – to such an incredible extent?” The crowd of cultivators were silently speculating in their hearts, feeling that things were becoming increasingly interesting.

AGM 154 – Grand Xia Empire

Qin Wentian ran at his full speed. At this moment, he was in a mountainous region, with no others in sight.

He wanted to find someone so he could understand the situation, but those cultivators from earlier had already unconsciously rejected him, there was no way for him to get any information from them.

However, since the Azure Emperor allowed him to enter this place, collecting the spirits of warbeasts, there should be still some hidden meaning within it.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian felt a sense of cold Qi. Shifting his gaze over, he noticed a gigantic python.

Not only that, on the back of this python, there was actually a pair of wings, and even a horn growing on its head.

“Double Winged Horned Python. The 360th ranked demonic beast in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian’s gaze froze as he stared at the demonic warbeast in front of him. This creature in front of him was indeed the Double Winged Horned Python recorded into Warbeast index. The Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, was it a land of wonder?

The body of the Winged Python hovered in the air, as a sinister light flickered in its eyes, staring at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian could clearly sense the hatred that was surging explosively in its

eyes.

In the Nine Astral Heavenly Layers, there were many beast-type Constellations. The beast-type constellations usually would have a similar counterpart in the world. No one knew if the beast-type constellations first existed or the demonic beast itself existed first.

Maybe, only those at the true pinnacle of cultivation would be able to unravel this mystery.

The wings of the Winged Python flickered as it hovered in the air. Hissing loudly, the immense body of the python flew towards Qin Wentian with terrifying speed.

In that instant, the Double Winged Horn Python was as though it was a terrifying raging dragon.

Qin Wentian's countenance became heavy as his aura exploded forth. The Forgotten Imprint of the Thousand Hands Imprint technique blasted out, clashing directly straight at the horn of the Winged Python. However, the manifestation of his palm strike, actually shattered.

The power of that collision forced Qin Wentian into retreat. The Double Winged Horned Python was a peak, 6th grade demonic beast, and could be considered as a peak Arterial Circulation cultivator.

Even after Qin Wentian was forced to retreat by the impact, the

Double Winged Horned Python was still in attack mode. It's gigantic tail swiped passed with a terrifying speed.

Qin Wentian executed his Garuda Movement Technique to it's utmost limits, narrowly avoiding the tail strike of the python with a speed fast as lightning,.

Chi... Only to see the Winged Python opening it's bloody maw, as it spat out numerous earth lances in the direction of Qin Wentian.

An illusory image of a Garuda flickered into existence behind Qin Wentian. Soaring into the skies with a single stepped, Qin Wentian dodged the hidden attacks of the earth lances, as he dashed towards the python.

“DIE!” Qin Wentian spat out a sharp sword Qi as rays of sword light slashed out in the direction of the Winged Python. The Doubled Winged Horned Python once again spat out earth lances, as it's immense body smashed towards Qin Wentian. With that incredibly sharp horn along, augmented by the power of its stature, if Qin Wentian was gored by that horn, he would definitely suffer a grievous injury.

Releasing his Astral Souls, a Heavenly Hammer appeared in Qin Wentian's hand as it weaved about in the air in an intricate dance. The Mountain-type Divine Energy in his body was also frenziedly channeled, and with a thunderous sound smashing through the air, the Astral Heavenly Hammer slammed downwards with brutal might.

The Python let out a low roar of anger, while the Heavenly Hammer in Qin Wentian's hands shattered after that blow, turning back into star light.

This strike of his, smashed the Double Winged Horned Python senseless. Qin Wentian once again circulated his Qi as he rapidly sent out palm strikes on to the python's brain, before summoning a mountain peak, as it crushed the head of the python into pieces. Thunderous rumbling sounds echoed out through the air as the immense body of the Doubled Winged Horned Python slumped to the ground as it's body flickered in and out of existence, gradually turned into something illusory.

“Is this the spirit of a warbeast?”

Qin Wentian's heart couldn't help but tremble as he witnessed the body of the Double Winged Horned Python actually turning into something illusory from reality. After which, a spiral appeared on Qin Wentian's palm as he placed his palm above the horn of the demonic python, absorbing the war beast's spirit. In this instant, a terrifying demonic Qi gushed forth from the body of Qin Wentian as a demonic light flickered in his eyes.

“This is, Spiritual Consciousness?” After he finished absorbing it, Qin Wentian felt as though his body was enhanced with the warbeast's spirit. The feeling was extremely vivid.

“The last ranked Double Winged Horned Python in the Warbeast Index is already so powerful, what about those that ranked in the top ten? How strong would they be?” Qin Wentian was extremely startled. Moreover, the Double Winged Horned Python Astral Soul

hailed from the 4th Heavenly Layer, and should be something summoned by a summoning-type Stellar Martial Cultivator, with a cultivation base that was at least at the Heavenly Dipper Realm.

And as for this particular Double Winged Horned Python, it's power was suppressed to the peak of Arterial Circulation.

Qin Wentian's gaze shifted over, as he noticed the beautiful silhouette of a woman standing far away gazing at him. This woman was none other than the one that conversed with him earlier.

"Are you really from the Nine Mystical Palace?" The beautiful silhouette of the woman strode forwards, she was clad in skyblue robes and had a cape over her shoulders.

"No." Qin Wentian replied, "How about you, where are you from?"

"Are you kidding? You know that this place is the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds, but you don't know who we are?" That female stared at Qin Wentian, her countenance as cold as ice. "The first batch of people with the qualifications to step into the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds from the Grand Xia Empire, were the 36 Heavenly Starlords from the past. Only the clans and sects which they belonged to had the qualifications to enter here. And after that, many of their keys were destroyed or snatched away by others and up till now, there are only nine great powers with the capabilities to enter. And you actually don't know who we are?"

“I’m not familiar with the Grand Xia Empire.” Qin Wentian replied. It seems that the Chu Country was really too small.

“What tier of power does the Nine Mystical Palace belongs to in the perspective of the Grand Xia Empire?” Qin Wentian asked again.

“The land space of the Grand Xia Empire is boundlessly vast, and has more than ten million countries. Among them, there were nine main states. And among the nine states, there were naturally some transcendent powers.” The girl indifferently continued, “The Nine Mystical Power is one of the transcendent power over the Qingzhou State, and has control over a few small countries.

Qin Wentian listened seriously, as he recalled the big circle which Mustang drew, and roughly understood the scope of the Grand Xia Empire.

So, the Chu Country was nothing but a small auxiliary country of a greater power.

Indeed, he needed to widen his perspective, the Chu Country was too small.

“The power she belongs to, the Greencloud Pavilion, was also a transcendent power in the Qingzhou state. Not only that, their power is much stronger when compared to the Nine Mystical Palace.” A voice drifted over from a distance away. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over only to see a silhouette walking over.

“Yue Qingfeng, what are you doing here?” The girl lightly smiled as she regarded the bunch of people. These people, were all from the Azure Emperor Palace.

“Why can’t I be here?” Yue Qingfeng laughed, as he turned to look at Qin Wentian, “I know where you come from.”

Qin Wentian stared at Yue Qingfeng, as a strange glow flashed in his eyes, waiting for the other party to continue speaking.

“A place called the Emperor Star Academy.” Yue Qingfeng continued, causing astonishment to flicker on the countenance of Qin Wentian.

“You are?”

“My name is Yue Qingfeng, i’m from the Azure Emperor Palace. You should know who the Azure Emperor is right? He single handedly created the glorious Azure Emperor Palace thousand of years ago, and was the first among the 36 Heavenly Starlords.”

Yue Qingfeng continue speaking, causing Qin Wentian’s heart to tremble.

The Azure Emperor, the first among the 36 Heavenly Starlords.

The Azure Emperor, was also the founder of the Emperor Star Academy.

“I’m indeed from the Emperor Star Academy, my name is Qin Wentian.”

To think that he would actually meet someone that hails from a variant branch in a place like this naturally caused Qin Wentian to feel a sense of kinship. One could say that the roots of the Azure Emperor Palace as well as the Emperor Star Academy were from the same source.

“Brother Qin, the Spirit Beast Testing Ground is exceedingly dangerous. Do you want to travel together? At least we can help each other when needed. How about it?” Yue Qingfeng straightforwardly spoke.

Qin Wentian nodded his head, he wanted to find someone to ask so he could clearly understand this place that was the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

“Qian Mengyu, do you wanna tag along?” Yue Qingfeng gazed at the female as he asked.

“No thanks.” The girl replied faintly, as she turned and departed.

“Have you already obtained a beast spirit?” Yue Qingfeng turn his gaze on Qin Wentian as he asked.

“Yeah, what use does the beast’s spirits have?” Qin Wentian

asked, bewilderment painting his voice.

“Back then, the peerless figures sealed the spirits of the 360 warbeasts in the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. Over here, the demonic beasts wasn’t the true body of the actual demonic beast but was a projection of a spiritual consciousness. It was rumoured that these demonic beasts were actually summoned from the Nine Astral Heavenly Layer, and for those that obtained the warbeast’s spirits, they would be able to communicate with the consciousness of the Astral Warbeasts, and would easily be able to sense the existence of the beast-type Constellation thus increasing the probability of forming an Astral Soul from it.

Yue Qingfeng continued explaining, “You should understand that, when cultivators of the Arterial Circulation Realm breaks into Yuanfu, they would be able to condense their 3rd Astral Soul. And usually, a Yuanfu Cultivator would only be able to condense an Astral Soul from the 3rd Heavenly Layer. And as for those with stronger talents, they would be able to condense one from the 4th Heavenly Layer. However, it wasn’t so easy to find and communicate with the constellations that represented the demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.”

“Oh, is this similar to the principle of the usage of a Yuan Meteor Stone?” Qin Wentian somewhat understood.

“This effect is many times more powerful compared to Yuan Meteor Stones. For a cultivator who can normally condense Astral Souls from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, with the aid of the spirits of the Astral Warbeasts, their consciousness would be able to survive in the 4th Heavenly Layer for a short period of time as the

respective constellation that represent the astral warbeast would form an innate link that result in successfully condensing a much more powerful Astral Soul compared to an Astral Soul at the 3rd Heavenly Layer.”

Thus, to Stellar Martial Cultivators, the temptation of obtaining warbeasts’ spirits were extremely great.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Brother Qin, you should have already experienced how powerful the warbeast earlier was. These warbeasts held immense hatred for us and would also want to devour us to upgrade their own powers. So, the danger we face would naturally escalate if we somehow meet those astral warbeasts that’s in the stronger rankings. And as for those warbeast ranked within the top ten, they were virtually invincible existences.”

Yue Qingfeng continued, “Thus, we wish to combine our strengths to face the warbeasts together.”

“I understand.” Qin Wentian nodded as he replied. The group of cultivators continued to walked forwards, entering the depths of the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

And at this moment, in Chu, a news of great import was spread around the country.

Qin Wu from the Qin Residence actually successfully escaped the Black Stronghold. The guards of the Black Stronghold were either dead or heavily injured, causing shock and terror throughout the Royal Capital.

The Black Stronghold, was a secret prison that was rumored to be unbreakable. But despite so, Qin Wu actually escaped safely, causing people to feel as though there was an undercurrent working in the dark.

Not only that, at the same time, two well-known martial academies in Chu, the Royal Academy as well as the Godly General Martial Palace, just announced their plans to merge.

And in this case, after the merger, they would surely have the power to contend against the Emperor Star Academy.

In reality, that was exactly what they wanted to do. They wanted to have a showdown with the Emperor Star Academy.

AGM 155 – Barbaric Warbeasts

And on the day of the merging of the two martial academies, there was another piece of important news. The crown prince of Snowcloud wanted to have a marriage engagement with the princess of Chu.

The princess of Chu had an extremely high probability to be the main wife of the crown prince of Snowcloud.

Despite this, Xiao Lǔ still didn't give up his earlier notions. He still sent men to the Emperor Star Academy requesting for them to return Qin Yao. The reason being that Qin Yao was one of the candidates to be the main wife of the crown prince of Snowcloud, they had to get her back no matter what.

The Emperor Star Academy naturally refused, and thus, the Royal Clan stepped in. They would send someone to visit the Emperor Star Academy.

Such a scenario occurring caused those with sharp senses to feel faint traces of danger in the air. Was the Royal Clan finally planning to make a move against the Emperor Star Academy?

And this wasn't the greatest variable. On the 2nd day after Qin Wu escaped, news of great importance spread from the battleground between the Qin Residence and the Royal Clan. The Royal Clan launched a powerful offensive, while sending experts to assassinate Qin He and Qin Ye. The end result was Qin He lost his remaining arm and suffered grievous injuries. If not for a

mysterious expert helping him, he would already have died.

Not only that, rumors also spread that the other great troops station on the borders of Chu began to stir, and had started to make their way towards the Royal Capital.

Their slogan was, “The Chu emperor is a tyrant, killing loyal subjects, slaying the generals that sacrificed so much for him, killing the hounds once the hares are hunted, and is no longer fit to have the mandate of heavens.”

And one hand, the news about the Wu King was bestowed death by the Emperor back then was also disseminated out, shaking the entire Chu Country. It created an immense amount of discussions and shook the hearts of the citizens. This, in addition to the visible actions that the Chu Royal Clan took when they dealt with the Qin Residence of Sky Harmony City, supported the fact that the current emperor was a tyrant and no longer fit to have the mandate of heavens. The country needs a transference of power.

The only news that was beneficial to the Royal Clan was that Snowcloud sent their troops and aid Chu in guarding their borders. At the same time, this was also telling the other countries that Snowcloud and Chu were in an alliance.

Those in high positions with great statuses could smell the brewing of the storm in the air. That had never thought that an innocuous event like the Jun Lin Banquet could actually spark such a terrifying chain reaction.

And regarding the storm that was brewing in the external world,

Qin Wentian in the Spirit Beast testing grounds had no inkling of it.

After spending a day in there, he gradually familiarised himself with these testing grounds. There were several warbeasts' spirits over here and it was impossible to obtain them all without a certain level of strength.

And he also understood that these testing grounds weren't a real world. He was the same as those demonic beasts, a physical body manifested by dream-will. His consciousness entered the testing ground via a dream, but here, the sense of reality was many times stronger than what he experienced before. Not only could he absorb the spirits of the beasts, similarly the warbeasts could absorb him.

At this moment, he was in an alliance with Yue Qingfeng and the rest, and was hunting another warbeast.

The ranking of this particular warbeast was not weak, it was actually a Flowerrock Leopard that was ranked at number 241. If one were to condense an Astral Soul from it, their body would be as tough as real granite, obtaining terrifying defense. Not only that, one's speed, agility and attack would also be augmented tremendously.

“Brother Qin, there are still three others over at my side, after they absorbed beasts' spirits, the next one will be yours. After all, you already ingested a spirit right after you entered.” Yue Qingfeng explained, this was already the 5th warbeast they had hunted together.

“It’s fine, I wish to travel alone now.” Qin Wentian replied. After they travelled together for a single day, although Yue Qingfeng was extremely courteous towards him, and although people of the Azure Emperor Palace shared the same root as the Emperor Star Academy, he could still feel disdain in the expressions of his party members as though they were looking down on him. Arrogance and pride lingered in the air faintly, creating an uncomfortable situation for Qin Wentian.

After all, although they shared the same roots, their statuses were completely different. They, were from the Azure Emperor Palace, while he was only from a martial academy in a small country.

This point could be clearly felt and seen when they distributed the warbeast spirits. However, Qin Wentian didn’t have much to add. He couldn’t change the perspectives of these people so easily. In that case, he might as well travel alone.

“Brother Qin, you should understand that this place is exceedingly dangerous.” Yue Qingfeng persuaded.

“I will be cautious.” Qin Wentian nonchalantly replied.

“Since this is the case, I will no longer obstruct brother Qin, but please do not let a moment of anger lead to the sacrifice of one’s life. Cooperation exists only because of benefits, but it’s just a matter of who is prioritised.” Yue Qingfeng added.

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows, the words of Yue Qingfeng seemed to be hinting at something. He didn't reply as he turned and departed from the area.

“What a reckless fellow, he doesn't know what death is. A mere cultivator from the Emperor Star Academy dares to put on such airs. He didn't even know that we saved his ass and yet still wanted to be on equal standing with us from the Azure Emperor Palace, how laughable. But I wonder why the Azure Emperor back then wanted to found such a academy.” Someone beside Yue Qingfeng impolitely remarked, not bothering to suppress his voice so as to ensure that Qin Wentian had heard him.

Increasing his speed, Qin Wentian left the area, Although he knew that the danger was greater if he travelled alone, he wasn't willing to lower his head and be part of their party just because of safety.

Qin Wentian arrived at a spacious grassland with a mountain range in front of him. However, at this moment, he could clearly sense danger nearing.

In front of him, a demonic beast slowly walked out from the mountain range.

This was actually a huge Roc, whose body shone with a resplendent light. The light in its eyes was sharp and cold as it stared at Qin Wentian.

“Silvery Roc, #98 in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian frowned.

This was the first time he had met a demonic beast in the top 100 rankings.

And not only that, behind him, there was also a sense of extreme danger.

Turning back, he discovered a gigantic demonic bear that was emitting terrifying waves of Demonic Qi.

And on the body of this demonic bear, it was as though there was a silvery armor covering it. Even its sharp claws were silver in color.

“Silver Armored Bear King, rank #97 in the Warbeast Index.” Qin Wentian froze. Both demonic beasts were extremely formidable opponents with rankings in the top 100, yet he was actually stuck between them. How unlucky.

Buzz. His body was akin to a Garuda as Qin Wentian dodged to the side.

The Silvery Roc flapped its wings as it transformed into a silver flash of lightning, moving with a speed even faster than Qin Wentian. That steps of the Silver Armored Bear King caused a tremor in the earth as booming sounds rang out, but the speed it possessed was only slightly slower when compared to Qin Wentian.

The top 100 rankings of the Warbeast Index were all terrifying

existences.

The Silvery Roc soared above Qin Wentian. Yet another ancient halberd appeared in his hands. Although this place wasn't reality, there wasn't much difference compared to it. In the external world, he always had a spare ancient halberd hidden within his interspatial ring.

Puchi! The Silvery Roc spat out a silver ray of light, slashing out with crazy speed towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian abruptly halted his movements, as he summoned the energy within his body, blasting out with his palm strikes in response, colliding with the silver ray of light.

The gusts of wind strengthened, the sharp claws of the Silvery Roc descended with lightning speed, aiming to grab Qin Wentian's head.

Qin Wentian's Mountain Splitter erupted forth, as sounds of steel clashing rang out, blocking the claw of the Silvery Roc.

"How strong." Qin Wentian managed to repel the Silvery Roc, but in response, his arms were numb, trembling badly from the impact. However at this moment, the Silver Armored Bear King had caught up, causing the earth to tremble with each step. Upon seeing Qin Wentian, it let out a bellow of rage as it swung its silver-colored paw directly at Qin Wentian.

"Falling Mountain Palms." Qin Wentian rapidly sent out palm strikes with his left palm, as the Divine Energy in his body surged

wildly. An instant later, his body was slammed heavily to the ground by the impact, as his left arm felt as though it was about to crumble into pieces.

The attack power of the warbeasts in the top 100 ranks was just too barbaric.

Despite falling to the ground, Qin Wentian was still in extreme danger. The Silvery Roc swooped downwards, as a silver ray of light pierced out from its beak. The cold eyes of the Roc were as though they could kill.

“If I die here, I won’t have this chance again.”

Qin Wentian was silently thinking in his heart. If he died here, he would lose the qualifications and would be expelled from the testing grounds. Luo Tianya back then should have also died inside this testing grounds, and as such, he wanted his son to succeed where he had failed.

Executing the Berserker Beast Halberd Art, impervious to wind and rain, Qin Wentian’s bloodline was seething. His body strengthened as it grew in size. His black hair fanned out behind him, and the ancient halberd in the air stabbed out in the air.

The Silvery Roc once again collided with Qin Wentian’s halberd. However, this time round, the Roc was blasted backwards and it tumbled through the air. One of its silver claws disintegrated into dust and it shrieked in madness, apparently wounded.

Despite this, Qin Wentian's situation was far from good. The Silver Armored Bear King once again sent out a powerful attack, dashing towards Qin Wentian.

“F*CK OFF.” Executing the Forgotten Imprint to its utmost limits, powered by the Mountain-type Divine Energy in his body, a thunderous sound rang out as the immense body of the Bear King was blocked. However, Qin Wentian was slammed to the ground once again.

“Top 10 warbeast spirits, Azure Emperor, you are damn ruthless indeed.”

To step into the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, Qin Wentian needed to obtain the warbeast spirits of demonic beasts ranked in the top 10 ranking of the Warbeast Index.

He didn't even dare to imagine the level of power the top ten warbeasts wielded. They should be the representation of constellations from the 5th Heavenly Layer, and if he could condense an Astral Soul from there, when he broke into the Heavenly Dipper Realm he would be able to summon the manifestation of the warbeast. How powerful would he be then?

The two warbeasts once again rushed towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian gingerly wiped away the traces of blood at the corners of his lips as his silhouette flickered, executing the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits, transforming into afterimages. At the same time, the ancient halberd in his right hand slashed out beautiful arcs, while his left palms shook relentlessly, sending out countless palm imprints. Despite his valiant attempts, his body

was quickly riddled with injuries. Under the siege of the two warbeasts, he feared that he would die sooner or later.

However, at this exact moment, a gust of wind billowed and a graceful figure clad in sky-blue robes appeared. A sharp sword appeared in her hands as she sliced towards the body of the Silvery Roc. Her Sword Qi warred with the claw of the Silvery Roc, as they intermingled together, before the Sword Qi dissipated. However, her sword will wasn't extinguished yet, and even more Sword Qi was generated. It gave an undying sense, growing and multiplying without end.

The pressure on Qin Wentian was lessened as he focused his attention on the bear king. Without the support from the swift Roc, although the attacks of the bear king were still powerful, it wasn't nimble enough. Qin Wentian easily dodged its attack while counterattacking with his ancient halberd, causing the bear to suffer from his attacks time and time again.

The battle continued for several long moments as two rows of silhouettes appeared near the battlefield. These newly appeared figures had no intention to help as they surrounded them, content with watching the battle of the warbeasts against Qin Wentian and Qian Mengyu.

They belonged to two different groups. One was the handsome-looking youth who fought with Qin Wentian earlier and his party members, as well as Yue Qingfeng and the rest.

After it saw the appearance of the cultivators The Silvery Roc soared towards the skies. It had the ability of flight – these people

could never be able to pursue it.

The Silver Armored Bear King lashed out in a panic. Qian Mengyu gazed at Qin Wentian and spoke, "Let's give this up. You may be able to defeat it, but I don't think you will have the chance to absorb its beast spirit."

Qin Wentian naturally also noticed the eyes of the other cultivators flickering with greed, as though they were akin to a tiger staring at its prey. However, how could he be willing to give up now?

Puchi. Abruptly, Qin Wentian's ancient halberd stabbed into one of the bear king's eyes, causing roars of agony to resound through the air. Twisting his ancient halberd that was in an eye of the bear king, Qin Wentian stabbed directly into its brain, causing the body of the bear king to grow indistinct, becoming something illusory.

With a shake of his palms, a familiar spiral appeared in the centre of his palms as he started absorbing the warbeast's spirit. The Demonic Qi emanating from him got stronger and stronger as his black hair danced about in the wind.

"Truly, does he not know death?" The people from the Azure Emperor Palace had mocking expressions on their faces seeing that Qin Wentian still actually dared to absorb the warbeast spirit in front of them.

So what if he absorbed it? All the people here were bodies made

from spirit consciousness.

As long as they absorbed the consciousness of Qin Wentian as he faded away in death, they could still absorb the warbeast spirits that he had absorbed before.

AGM 156 – Ranked #9 In The Warbeast Index

Qin Wentian's black hair fluttered behind him, as he gazed at Qian Mengyu, he asked. "The sword technique you used earlier, was that the Nine Swords of Life?"

Qian Mengyu was startled. "How did you know that?"

Qin Wentian said that he came from a small country, how would he know that the sword technique she used earlier was the Nine Swords of Life?

"I once saw someone executing that exact sword technique." Qin Wentian replied. This set of sword techniques was what Gongyang Hong had displayed back then when they were attempting to crack the riddle of the paintings. Eventually, they discovered that this particular sword technique was the favourite sword technique of the girl Gongyang Hong loved most, but what happened to them exactly, Qin Wentian couldn't be sure.

"Thanks for your help earlier." Qin Wentian smiled.

"You should start worrying about yourself." Qian Mengyu shifted her steps away. Although Qin Wentian recognised the Nine Swords of Life, she had no reasons to help him further. It wasn't that easy for her to enter the testing grounds and naturally she wouldn't want to die here.

Qin Wentian glanced at his surroundings. Indeed, this was not going to be so easy to resolve.

Psst! Abruptly Qin Wentian's body flickered, as the pair of illusory Garuda wings appeared on his back, retreating in the direction of a narrow gap.

Only to see two people stepping up, intending to block his path. Qin Wentian didn't slow in the slightest. He blasted out with his Mountain Splitter, aiming at one of the two that obstructed him.

Puchi! A crisp sound echoed in the air as one of the bodies of the blockers turned illusory after suffering a halberd strike right through his brain. At the same time, Qin Wentian sent out a palm imprint to his left.

BOOM! A tremendous force could be felt. Borrowing the power of the impact, Qin Wentian soared into the skies, then landed outside the encirclement and frenziedly dashed away.

“What a marvelous usage of the Garuda Movement Technique, he should have already cultivated that to the Great Perfection Level at the Arterial Circulation Realm.”

The countenances of those from the Azure Emperor Palace all changed. One by one, they all followed after Qin Wentian using the exact same movement technique – the Garuda Movement Technique.

And as for that handsome-looking youth and his sidekicks, they came from the Sky Demon Sect. When they executed their movement techniques, sounds of a raging tornado could be heard. Their speed was actually also incredibly fast.

“Nice guts. It isn’t good to make an enemy out of those from the Sky Demon Sect.”

Qian Mengyu executed her own movement technique too as she followed after.

Qin Wentian clearly understood that the people in this testing grounds were not cultivators of Chu. And those who stood at the pinnacle of the Arterial Circulation Realm in Chu were nothing compared to the elites in here. No matter which of those that was in the testing grounds, as long as they were placed in Chu, they would definitely be the elites among the elites, and especially for that handsome-looking youth with a hint of demonic air in his eyes. Earlier when Qin Wentian exchanged blows with him, he was stunned by the incredible prowess of that guy.

He wasn’t so blind in his self confidence to handle the encirclement earlier with just a cultivation base at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. And as such, he could only choose to escape first with the Garuda Movement Technique.

Currently, after he cultivated to the large success stage of the Garuda Movement Technique [Arterial Circulation Realm], there shouldn’t be anyone at the same realm able to overtake him in speed.

As a result, his pursuers became fewer and fewer as most couldn't keep up. Among those that could keep up, the most notable ones were the handsome youth from the Sky Demon Sect, Yue Qingfeng from the Azure Emperor Palace and Qian Mengyu from the Greencloud Pavilion.

During the way, they also met other experts. And upon seeing the situation, the other experts also decided to chase after Qin Wentian together.

There was a river in front of Qin Wentian. Gathering his momentum, Qin Wentian rose sharply from the ground as he soared into the skies like a garuda, landing on the opposite bank.

The other pursuers all caught up, and respectively executed their innate techniques as they crossed the river.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian galloped into a forested region which caused the faces of his pursuers to turn unsightly. There were so many experts within the group of pursuers, yet they had no way to continue chasing him.

Instead of spending such a huge amount of time chasing him to no avail, they might as well be killing the warbeasts.

Yet they didn't know that at this moment, the embers of fury were burning deep within Qin Wentian's heart. In this testing grounds, how many warbeast spirits were there that were stronger than the one he absorbed? Why did they have to force him to such

an extent?

At the end of the forested region there was actually a stone mountain with a waterfall cascading down from it. Lakes were on both the left and right sides of it, this was actually a place with no paths of retreat.

Qin Wentian slowed his steps as he halted. Behind him, he could hear sounds of panting. The handsome-looking youth from the Sky Demon Sect was the first to catch up with him.

Yao Sheng had a pair of illusory wings belonging to the legendary Roc behind his back. His gaze held hints of demonic air within them as he drifted in the air towards Qin Wentian; the gentle palm power of his was sent out once again.

Buzz! Qin Wentian's ancient halberd smashed forwards with all he had, piercing out with a speed akin to lightning.

Yao Sheng shook his palms as Demonic Qi frenziedly erupted. His palms transformed into a gigantic bear paw as it smashed forwards, colliding with the ancient halberd of Qin Wentian. Yao Sheng's body was light beyond comparison and at the moment of impact, he redirected the force and shot forwards, brushing past the ancient halberd and getting closer to Qin Wentian. Releasing a demonic light screen, the rays of his attacks enveloped Qin Wentian, and he blasted forth with that seemingly weak and gentle palm strike once again.

Qin Wentian didn't retreat. The bloodline that had the

dominance of a monarch surged crazily in his body. Replying to the palm attack with a palm strike of his own, he smashed forth with the strength of a mountain peak.

BOOM. A scary afterwind billowed in the surroundings. Both of them were forced back by the impact. Qin Wentian's arterial pathways were shuddering, while his heart was palpitating madly. The innate techniques of his opponent were too mysterious and crafty.

Yao Sheng was forced by a single step and a strange glow flashed in his eyes. Soon after, the glint of coldness in his eyes became stronger and stronger.

A towering surge of Demonic Qi exploded out, and a plate of scaly armor formed on the sides of his arms as demonic light gushed forth from his eyes. The wings of the roc on his back materialized again, as the demonic light it exuded became increasingly bright. At this moment, he didn't seem like a human anymore, but rather a demon.

With a strong gust of wind, Yao Sheng lunged again towards Qin Wentian.

"Fallen Star Stance." The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's hands exploded forth with tyrannical might, as terrifying spirals formed at the tip of his halberd.

The palms of Yao Sheng stuck out forwards and thunderous sounds rocked the air. His body was akin to an agile snake, actually

evading Qin Wentian's strongest attack, as he transformed into a blur of shadows.

“DIE!” A shrill voice spat out. Yao Sheng's arms somehow lengthened as they transformed into sharp claws, slashing towards Qin Wentian's head.

The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's grasp trembled and he spat out a sword beam. With a roar of rage, his left palm unleashed the Falling Mountain Palms as both of their attacks frenziedly clashed together. Qin Wentian was once again ruthlessly forced backwards by the impact.

Despite using the power of his bloodline limit, he was still forced into retreat. Staring at the body of Yao Sheng, Qin Wentian could also faintly sense the presence of another bloodline limit. However, the blood in Yao Sheng's body seemed strange. It was as though... the blood in his body was that of a beast!

The other pursuers gradually caught up and couldn't help but be dumbfounded seeing that Qin Wentian had not been killed by Yao Sheng's hands yet. This mysterious person that ought not to be here in the testing grounds actually had a strength level that was so astounding.

BOOM! And at this very moment, tremors shook the earth. The hearts of the crowd shuddered as they turned their gazes ahead, only seeing something akin to a mountain moving.

Rumbling sounds rang out as huge rocks and stones from the

mountains fell downwards like meteorites from the skies. The sounds made by the falling rocks were extremely scary while a terrifying Demonic Qi blasted out to the surroundings.

ROOARRRR~ An earth-shattering howl rang out, causing the ground to split apart. The water in both the lakes frenziedly gurgled and underneath the waterfall, a terrifying demonic beast appeared, its movements causing huge waves to crash down like a tsunami.

The body of this beast was serpentine in nature, and was coiled underneath the waterfall. The body size of this beast couldn't be determined yet, its body was covered by armor of scales and there were sharp stings embedded on the scaly armor. Both of its arms were huge and ended in five claws. Its body shape was long and sinuous, curved like a hook, emanating a cold and sharp sensation.

At this moment, this demonic beasts opened its maw and roared in rage. The sharpness of its jagged teeth struck fear and terror in the hearts of the crowd. This was many times stronger compared to the other demonic beasts that they had seen.

“Blue-scaled Flood Dragon, ranked #9 in the Warbeast Index.”

The hearts of everyone were trembling as they looked at the demonic beast. A spirit belonging to one of the top 10 beasts in the warbeast index was what all these cultivators wanted to achieve the most.

But, the combat prowess of the top ten demonic beasts could be

considered heaven-shaking and earth-shattering, and almost invincible in the realm of Arterial Circulation.

“What a powerful demonic beast, if I absorbed its spirit, wouldn’t that give me a tremendous boost to my sensory abilities, allowing me to form an innate connection to the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon Constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer?” A fluctuation arose in Qin Wentian’s heart. If he guessed correctly, he had already decided which Astral Soul to condense for his 3rd Astral Soul.

There were so many demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index, and would allow cultivators to easily sense the existence of the demonic beasts’ respective constellations in the Heavenly Layers, for those that were successful in condensing a beast-type Astral Soul, their physical combat prowess would undoubtedly heighten immensely.

But even so, no matter what beast-type astral soul it was, being able to summon the physical aspects of it was a different ball game altogether.

Qin Wentian understood the reason why summoning-type cultivators were so rare. It was because of the immense difficulty. If one didn’t have enough talent, the physical form of the beast they summoned wouldn’t be much help at all.

In the perspectives of many people, summoning-type Astral Souls were all trash despite the fact that there were some genius summoners that possessed terrifying strength.

At this moment, the desire to be a future beast summoner became stronger and stronger within Qin Wentian's heart.

If one day he could summon different types of imposing warbeasts whose roars shook the Heavens and Earth, how awe-inspiring would that be?

Naturally this was merely a small bud of thought in his heart and was far off in the future. What he needed to do now was to deal with the situation that was in front of him.

The ranked #9 Blue-scaled Flood Dragon wasn't ranked number #9 for nothing.

Inclining its proud head, it glanced down with disdain at the human cultivators. That pair of demonic sharp eyes brimmed with killing intent.

Psssst! Abruptly, the flood dragon began its movement. Its immense body appeared in front of Qin Wentian in an instant, as the thick and scaly arms shot forth, the terrifying claws breaking apart the mountain peaks, piercing towards Qin Wentian's body.

Qin Wentian's bloodline limit roared in protest, as he exploded forwards with Fallen Star. The ancient halberd howled in madness as it met the claw strike of the flood dragon head on.

BOOM!

The body of Qin Wentian was flung through the air as Qi and blood roiled haphazardly in his body, causing him to involuntarily spit out a mouthful of fresh blood. The ancient halberd in his hands shuddered, as though it had almost reached its breaking point.

“How powerful.” Qin Wentian’s heart trembled. Although its power was suppressed to the pinnacle of a 6th level demonic beast, the might it possessed was actually ridiculous to such an extent.

Was this the power of the top 10 ranking beasts? It seems that it was going to be unfathomably difficult for Qin Wentian should he wish to ascend to the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. At the very least, it was almost impossible for him at this moment.

The Azure Emperor’s requirement for one to step onto the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was that one had to obtain the spirit of one of the top ten ranking demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index. This requirement was undoubtedly several times more difficult compared to obtaining the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet.

Despite the fact that he could obtain the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet, his power was still far from being able to slay a demonic beast ranked within the top 10.

One could see how great the disparity was between the difficulty of the two tasks. What on earth did the Azure Emperor leave behind on the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?!

AGM 157 – Plunder

Yao Sheng didn't continue attacking Qin Wentian, not with one of the top ten demonic beasts standing in front of him. If he could somehow absorb the spirit of this warbeast, he would most assuredly be able to condense an Astral Soul belonging to a constellation in the 5th Heavenly Layer.

Filled with wild ambition, Yao Sheng's heart was roaring with excitement. Unlike the others, he didn't feel much fear or terror.

After all, in these testing grounds, if he really were to die, it was only his spiritual body that would dissipate and would lose the chance to ever come in here again, but he himself wouldn't face true death.

To the people of the Sky Demon Sect, the lure of one of the top ten ranked demonic beasts was so great to the extent that they wouldn't hesitate to risk their lives.

“Everyone, how about cooperating?”

Yao Sheng gazed at Yue Qingfeng, Qian Mengyu, and the surrounding people as he suggested.

The gazes of the crowd were flickering. It wasn't impossible to cooperate, but if they really did so, who would the spoils belong to in the end?

If one of them really did absorb the warbeast spirit, the others would most probably gang up on the one who did so.

Not long ago, this exact scenario just happened to Qin Wentian.

“Ye Yue, what are your thoughts on this?” Yue Qingfeng gazed at a youth standing by his side as he inquired. This youth was clad in a robe embroidered with the picture of a river of constellations.

This person was from the Venerate Heaven Sect. As for the rankings of the 36 Heavenly Starlords, they were precisely determined by the Venerate Heaven Sect.

Within the Grand Xia Empire, the Venerate Heaven Sect was the one with the most authority. They had absolute influence over the ranking charts of cultivators, and their decisions would affect numerous countries. An example was Chu – a ranking system referred to as the rankings of the ten prodigies.

“Let’s cooperate.” Ye Yue took the lead, and a sharp light glinted in his eyes as he stared at the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

The group of people split up and surrounding the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. All of them released their Astral Souls.

The flood dragon let out a howl of rage as it smashed its way towards Yao Sheng, only to see Yao Sheng’s beast blood start surging up. A towering demonic Qi filled the air. The wings of the legendary Roc flickered as he turned into a stream of light,

similarly dashing towards the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

Puchi! The flood dragon's sharp claws missed Yao Sheng. Yao Sheng was actually hovering in the air, and after he found the appropriate angle, he dashed forth, appearing in front of the dragon's head in an instant. Yao Sheng's nimbleness and agility left Qin Wentian astounded.

But even so, the reaction speed of the flood dragon was extremely punctual as well. Wrenching its maw open, it chomped towards the direction of Yao Sheng, wanting to devour him in a single gulp.

Brnnn! A resplendent sword light exploded forth as Qian Mengyu soared into the skies. Columns and columns of undying sword rays frenziedly pierced into the maw of the flood dragon.

This scenario caused the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon to have no choice but to close its maw. At the same time, Yao Sheng's palm strikes transformed into a gigantic bear's paw as it swatted downwards, targeting the brain of the flood dragon.

Yao Sheng and Qian Mengyu was of two different camps, yet their cooperation was exquisite. The timing and rhythm of each attack complemented each other perfectly.

The head of the flood dragon reared backwards. Yao Sheng's combat prowess was exceptionally terrifying, and there was also an additional vibration effect. For a short period of time, the flood dragon was stunned due to the rattling of its brain, and after it recovered, it swept out its gigantic tail like a whip. The spikes

embedded on it were all akin to sharp swords.

Yue Qingfeng also dashed forwards while executing the Garuda Movement Technique, avoiding the immense body of the flood dragon. His target was also the brain of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

Ye Yue did the same as well.

Their individual attacks seemed to somehow meld into a perfectly tacit understanding, with each complementing the other. Everyone was aiming for the brain of the Blue-scaled Dragon Flood King. If one strike or two strikes didn't work, they would attack until it worked.

“Everyone is an elite, but if we are talking about one on one, there would definitely be no one able to contend against the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. But when they cooperate, the augmentation effect isn't something so simple as one plus one equals two.” Each of their individual attacks synergized so well that they caused the tyrannical, powerful attacks of the flood dragon to be utterly mitigated.

Qin Wentian personally witnessed the fascinating fight between the elites and the flood dragon. The flood dragon let out a huge bellow of rage as its immense body twisted and turned in the air. Its long, sinuous neck stretched out. Its maw chomped towards Qian Mengyu, disregarding the attacks of the other elites who was targeting its body.

“DIE!” Qian Mengyu’s palms shook as Astral Light metamorphosed into sword rays, manifesting countless sharp swords that flowed continuously like a beam of light, slashing out against the maw of the flood dragon.

The flood dragon moved its head downwards and continued rushing towards her. Qian Mengyu’s sharp swords actually managed to draw blood, but ultimately they were still not enough to seriously wound the dragon.

Qian Mengyu spun a full circle, wanting to retreat. But at this moment, the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon in front of her was already enraged to the point of losing its reason. It frenziedly pursued her, disregarding the attacks of others. It definitely had to kill one of the elites first before it could have a chance, and this troublesome human who excel in sword arts was too irritating.

Qian Mengyu’s countenance turned extremely unsightly as she saw the flood dragon relentless pursuing her. She had no way of evading the dragon’s ferocious attacks for much longer and could only choose to muster all her strength for defense.

Qin Wentian was standing not far from Qian Mengyu’s side. Upon seeing this scenario, the look in his eyes grew cold, extremely cold.

“Over here.” Qin Wentian called out to Qian Mengyu.

Qian Mengyu’s graceful figure dashed towards Qin Wentian, while the flood dragon followed close behind, unwilling to give up

its pursuit. Wrenching open its huge maw again, its neck extended forwards with terrifying speed, wanting Qian Mengyu to crumble under its bite.

Bsst! A raging wind blew past as Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits. He actually dashed right into the waiting maw of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon.

A cruel light flashed in the dragon's eyes as it snapped its maw shut. The dragon wanted to lacerate Qin Wentian into pieces with its jagged teeth.

“Wu...” A pitiful sound whimpered out. Qin Wentian moved like the wind as he retreated from the huge maw of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. An ancient halberd appeared in the space where Qin Wentian should have been in. Its tip pierced the dragon's upper jaw and stood erect, propping the maw of the dragon wide open.

“Success.” Qin Wentian saw the giant tail of the dragon rampaging about as it let out howls of agony. His silhouette flickered, and he instantly appeared on the snout of flood dragon as he smashed down with his Falling Mountain Palms, driving the ancient halberd even deeper with each palm strike, causing the flood dragon to be almost driven mad by the intense agony.

“Do it.” The others also rushed ahead, targeting their attacks at the head region of the flood dragon as the ancient halberd in its maw finally penetrated through its snout. The force of its rampaging tail grew weaker and weaker.

“This fellow, how lucky is he.”

Everyone was exclaiming how lucky Qin Wentian was in their hearts. He actually managed to stick the ancient halberd inside the maw of the flood dragon just when it was snapping its maw shut, causing the ancient halberd to be stuck there. This was what created the opportunity for them to freely rain their attacks on the dragon.

The body of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon gradually started to lose its form as it slowly started turning illusory and transformed into a beast spirit.

Qin Wentian retrieved his ancient halberd, and at the same time, his palms wavered as he prepared to absorb the beast spirit. His actions were mirrored by almost all the cultivators around him.

One of the top ten ranked beast in the Warbeast Index, everyone wanted it for their own.

ROAR. The spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon let out a terrifying roar as it lunged towards Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian felt his consciousness trembling violently as he too started turning illusory.

Explosively retreating, this finally caused him return back to normal, but his countenance was extremely unsightly.

The spiritual consciousness of the flood dragon has already turned into a beast spirit, but it was still so tyrannical. It directly entered his mind sea and attacked his consciousness. Although he had a flesh and blood body, in here, everyone was made from spiritual consciousness. And as long as one's consciousness was injured, they too would fade away.

Thunderous roars rumbled the Heavens and Earth. Qian Mengyu, Yao Sheng and the rest were also forced to retreat. Their countenances were exceptionally ugly to behold as they had never encountered a beast spirit that was this hard to deal with.

The body of Yao Sheng surged with his beast blood as he flew towards the beast spirit, wanting to devour it for himself.

Buzz! The spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon dashed away, its cold eyes disdainfully glaring at the others. Even though it had been reduced to spirit form, no one should even think of absorbing it.

Blue-scaled Flood Dragon's beast spirit was too tyrannical.

Its eyes narrowed dangerously as it stared at Qin Wentian. It was precisely this human who caused its fleshy body to be destroyed.

OWWWWWWWWWWW! The beast spirit howled as it once again dashed towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt his consciousness trembling. Spirals appeared

on his palms, and at the moment he made contact with the flood dragon, he channeled all his might into absorbing its spirit.

Those cold bestial eyes stared cruelly at him, and it attempted to blast Qin Wentian's consciousness into smithereens, causing Qin Wentian's body to turn illusory, flickering in and out of existence.

Upon seeing this, Yao Sheng and the rest stood by and didn't attempt to help Qin Wentian. Nervousness could be seen in Qian Mengyu's eyes, but she had no idea how would she be able to handle such a tyrannical beast spirit.

"Vile creature, you still dare to be so savage even when you are reduced to spirit form." Icy coldness filled Qin Wentian's eyes as he stared at the flood dragon. His Great Dream Astral Soul was released, and an instant later, he transported himself and the flood dragon spirit into a dreamscape of his own creation.

Inside the dream, Qin Wentian was an unrivalled existence, like the Monarch of all under the Heavens, as he stared at the tiny pitiful beast spirit with contempt.

"Vile creature, submit to me." Qin Wentian roared. Thunder howled, and lightning struck down from the Heavens, smashing into the spirit form of the flood dragon, causing it to convulse violently in pain.

It was currently reduced to a spirit form and had absolutely no way to defend against the abuse of Qin Wentian's dream-will. The power of dreams was also a type of consciousness and will,

allowing opponents to believe what they experienced was real.

How could a mere spirit body be able to withstand it?

Outside the dreamscape, the spirit of the flood dragon grew more and more indistinct, as though it was slowly being absorbed by Qin Wentian. The once tyrannical beast spirit seemed to have no more fighting spirit, having lost its previous rage as it obediently prepared to submit.

“What’s happening?”

Their gazes were all fixated on the spirit of the warbeast, which was fading in and out of existence, as though it would dissipate any second. This caused them to feel a sense of foreboding.

Could it be that this fellow actually already absorbed the spirit of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon?

Psssth~ The beast spirit transformed into a column of blueish smoke that entered into Qin Wentian’s body. The demonic Qi that Qin Wentian currently was emitting was even stronger than that of Yao Sheng.

“No good, he’s trying to exit the testing grounds.”

Yue Qingfeng shouted in a panic. When he had been in a party with Qin Wentian, he remembered Qin Wentian casually asking him how to exit from the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. He didn’t

thought much of it then, so he explained to Qin Wentian that one merely needed to be aware and gradually force one's consciousness to awaken, peeling away the testing ground's false strips of reality. But this needed a certain amount of time to accomplish.

Qin Wentian obviously made use of the gap of time during the absorption of the beast spirit to simultaneously prepare for his exit.

Yao Sheng and the rest lunged forwards when they discovered this, but much to their surprise, they found Qian Mengyu brandishing her sword and blocking their path to Qin Wentian.

“Qian Mengyu, what the hell are you doing?” Yue Qingfeng coldly hollered.

“He has the most credit when it comes to killing the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. There's nothing wrong even if he absorbs the beast spirit.” Meng Qianyu coldly replied.

“Get out of the way.” Yao Sheng strode forwards.

“There's no more time.” Ye Yue spoke in a low voice. They saw Qin Wentian's body turning illusory as he completely disappeared from within the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds.

Seeing this occurring caused the countenances of the crowd to turn incomparably ugly.

Qin Wentian left with the beast spirit belonging to the number nine demonic beast, the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon!

AGM 158 – Fiend Transformation Art

In the Emperor Star Academy, the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Within the entrance, Qin Wentian's eyes abruptly snapped open as a demonic light flickered in his eyes. His aura and presence seemed to be heavily tinged by a sense of demonic Qi.

Qin Wentian didn't take any other actions. He knew that he was successful in bringing back the beast spirit. At this moment, he could feel a savage aura contained within his sea of consciousness.

“Will I be able to sense the existence of those more powerful beast-type Astral Souls within the Heavenly Layers after I absorb the spirits?” Qin Wentian mumbled in his heart. After this, he gradually stood up. He pushed open the door and strode out of the entrance.

“I left of my own volition, and thus my spirit body wasn't destroyed. I can still enter the testing ground in the future.” Qin Wentian gazed at the entrance of the secret realm. Back then, Luo Tianya hadn't been so lucky, and his spirit body must have been destroyed. That was why he had hoped that his son would be able to continue what he had failed, stepping onto the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

How sad was it that what Luo Tianya couldn't accomplished had been accomplished by Qin Wentian instead of Luo Qianqiu?

Qin Wentian shifted his gaze onto the 2nd entrance with the numeral '8' inscribed on top of it. According to that thin piece of paper, so long as one obtained one of the top ten ranked beast spirit listed in the Warbeast Index, that person would have the qualifications to enter the 8th level. If this was the case, he should have cleared the requirements.

Lifting his foot, Qin Wentian walked towards the second entrance. As he got closer, he noticed that above the entrance, there were several murals. These murals were actually none other than the top ten ranked demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.

“How do I get in?” Bewilderment painted Qin Wentian’s countenance. The door to entrance of the 7th level was open. So as long as one stepped onto this level, they would be able to enter there. However, the door to the entrance of the 8th level was tightly shut.

“Insert the beast spirit into its respective mural.” A voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned back his head, but there was no one. The owner of this voice should have been the guardian of the 7th level whom Qin Wentian had met earlier.

Qin Wentian once again shifted his gaze towards the mural of the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon. Soon after, demonic light glinted in his eyes as he retrieved the spirit consciousness of the flood dragon from his sea of consciousness, inserting it within the mural. In an instant, the mural shone with resplendent light as the door to entrance of the 8th level slowly opened.

“It’s opening.”

Qin Wentian crossed the entrance and entered a vast expanse of sealed space. Above his head, there were murals of numerous demonic beasts shining with Astral Light. They were so vivid that it was as though they were alive.

In the center of the sealed space, there was a prayer mat. Qin Wentian sat down cross-leggedly as the Astral Light from the murals shrouded his body, flowing into him.

Upon seeing such an unfathomable event occurring, Qin Wentian closed his eyes. As the Astral Lights entered his body, he experienced a sensation that was extremely familiar to him.

This was a memory fragment left behind by the Azure Emperor.

“The myriad of creatures of Heavens and Earth are all capable of cultivation, regardless if one was a human or a demon. Even so, there are marked differences between the two races. The degree of talent in certain aspects, for example, the strength of the fleshy body, defense, and regeneration, are all many times higher for demonic creatures compared to humans. As for humans, their level of insight and comprehension far surpasses that of demons. Humans created many different kind of powerful innate techniques, enabling them to stand on par with, or even surpass the demonic beasts, becoming the favored sons of Heaven.”

“At a certain point of their cultivation, after the demonic beasts break into the Heavenly Dipper Realm, they will be able to

metamorphose into a human and learn the innate techniques of the human race. In this manner, demons seemed to pursue humanity as their goal. But even so, they would never be able to have the same level of insights and comprehension that humans are born with.”

“Humans who were originally demons still have no way of combining the advantages of the two different races perfectly. In that case, in order to pursue perfection, the only method left was to use humanity as the base while cultivating the demonic arts. If human cultivators were able to have the powerful fleshy bodies of demons in addition to their high level of comprehension and variety of powerful innate techniques, how much would their strength be augmented by?”

While the memory fragment was asking, Qin Wentian’s heart palpitated wildly with excitement.

What an insane idea, using humanity as the base to cultivate the power of demons.

“In reality, for human cultivators, there are already some who gravitated towards this idea. Those cultivators were none other than Beast-type Astral Souls Stellar Martial Cultivators. Astral Souls granted a possibility, enabling them to possess the ferociousness of demonic beasts. But despite of this, there’s still a limit. If one wanted to use demonic energy to fully bring out the potential of humans, firstly, one must possess a tyrannical Demonic Beast-type Astral Soul. If not, there would be no meaning to it.”

This unknown voice drifted into his ears. Qin Wentian somehow understood why the test of the 7th level was to hunt for one of the top ten ranked demonic beasts listed in the Warbeast Index.

The Azure Emperor hoped that only those who obtained one of the top ten ranked demonic beast spirits would be able to enter here. Only with qualifications like this would one be able to absorb the ferocious Demonic Beast-type Astral Energy.

After that, another memory fragment entered Qin Wentian's consciousness as the light atop his head gradually darkened.

After several moments, Qin Wentian fully absorbed the memory fragment. A light of incomparable sharpness flickered in the depths of his eyes. In his mind, there were only three words – Fiend Transformation Art.

“Fiend Transformation Art!”

“A bold creation, an insane cultivation method.” Qin Wentian's heart had huge waves arising within it. An unknown sense of respect and reverence surfaced in his heart for the creator of this cultivation art. This was just too perverse.

Human cultivators were terrifying indeed.

He remembered the last sentence the Azure Emperor left behind in the memory fragment.

“Back then, because of a series of lucky coincidences, I obtained the Fiend Transformation Art. With awe and shock in my heart, I knew that if this cultivation art were to be imparted, the Sky Demon Palace would definitely send their men to pursue those who cultivate it. And thus, I cultivated this in secret. Only in moments of extreme danger did I unleash the technique. But if one day, if I truly pass on without leaving behind an inheritor to this technique, I would have sinned. To avoid calamity, I didn’t pass this cultivation art down to the members of my Azure Emperor Palace, but I wasn’t willing to let this cultivation art disappear along with the passing of time.”

Qin Wentian understood. The value of this Fiend Transformation Art was the same as his Spiritual Refinement Method. If people knew about this, a calamity would definitely descend on the one who possessed the techniques.

Luckily for him, there’s no visible external effects of cultivating the Spiritual Refinement Method. To outsiders, it would only seem that his attacks were a lot stronger compared to others at the same level.

There were three levels to the Fiend Transformation Art.

The first level, Fiendish Body. Channel demonic Qi and circulate it within the arterial pathways, energy channels, and meridians of your body to cast and refine a fleshy body that was as tyrannical as that of demonic beasts. Not only just the exterior of the fleshy body, one’s five viseras and six inner organs also had to be strengthened to the point of something akin to a demonic beast, immensely boosting one’s vitality. After all, the life-force of

demonic beasts were many times stronger when compared to humans at the same stage of cultivation.

The second level, Fiendish Emergence. Use the support of tremendous Demonic Yuan Energy and condense a true demonic body, covering one's real body. This realm would be much more powerful if it was assisted and complemented by a powerful Beast-type Astral Soul.

And the third level, Fiend Transformation. At this level, one could easily access demonification, taking on demon form, and perfectly combine the two most ideal traits of demons and humans into one body. One could grow real Garuda Wings on their back and soar through the universe, or transform into a demonic dragon with world-shaking might.

Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath as his heart pounded in his chest. The Azure Emperor actually left such a tyrannical technique on the 8th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

After learning about everything, from Qin Wentian's perspective, he now felt that the demonic beasts ranked ninth and tenth in the Warbeast Index didn't seemed to be powerful enough to be used for cultivating the Fiend Transformation Art. The best choices were undoubtedly being able to condense the respective Astral Souls for those top ranking demonic beasts. Only then would the demonic Yuan Energy be sufficient to drive the Fiend Transformation Art.

However, this realization made things difficult for Qin Wentian once more. Initially, he had already planned on condensing a

Summoning-type Astral Soul for his third condensation. But to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art, a tyrannical Beast-type Astral Soul would definitely be much more suitable for it.

“I shall ignore it for now.” Qin Wentian didn’t bother to think further, but instead, he started cultivating the first level of the Fiend Transformation Art. The creator of this transformation art was exceptionally familiar with the breathing techniques of demonic beasts and had created a special breathing method and Qi circulation technique solely for the Fiend Transformation Art.

With his eyes closed, Qin Wentian calmed his heart down as he cultivated. His breathing wasn’t even, sometimes slow, sometimes ragged, but it eventually came to a point of balance. His heart pounded in tandem with every breath he took as the Astral Energy flowed and circulated about in his body according to the Qi circulation method. Every time he breathed, his viscera and inner organs would also lurched violently in accordance to the pounding of his heartbeat,

Qin Wentian gradually entered into an incredible, extremely marvellous state. He didn’t realize that the blood within his body gradually started to heat up, automatically circulating around his entire body, complementing with his breathing methods and the Qi circulation technique.

Two days later, after Qin Wentian awoke from that marvellous state, he discovered that his cultivation this time around had produced astonishing changes. He couldn’t help but be puzzled. Could it be he was really so talented? That his physique was exceptionally suitable for cultivating the Fiend Transformation

Art?

“It’s about time to leave.” Qin Wentian stood out and exited the Heavenly Star Pavilion. The first level of the Fiend Transformation Art required an astronomical amount of cultivation resources in order to master. After he exited the pavilion, Qin Wentian went to the Sky Transport Network to send a letter to Francis, giving him free reign to handle minor matters like this. After which, he continued cultivating in closed door seclusion, focusing all his attention to raising his cultivation.

In the Heavenly Layers far up above in the galaxy, Qin Wentian’s consciousness arrived in the 5th Heavenly Layer. In front of his eyes, there were countless stars interweaved together to form the constellation representing the Blue-scaled Flood Dragon, which contained tremendous Demonic Beast-type Yuan Energy within.

“Indeed, it’s almost effortless to find and form an innate link with this constellation.” Qin Wentian finally understood why so many students and disciples of the great powers wanted to go the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. After obtaining the beast spirit, condensing an Astral Soul from the respective constellation it represented was almost guaranteed.

And now, outside of Qin Wentian’s residence, Fan Le arrived. Qin Chuan and Qin Yao were there as well.

“Uncle, is Wentian still cultivating?” Fan Le inquired as he spoke to Qin Chuan.

“Yeah, this fellow is really hard working. Immediately entering into closed door seclusion right after his return from the Heavenly Star Pavilion...perhaps he gained some insights.” Qin Chuan replied. Currently, there were many matters on his heart. He clearly understood the changes that were currently happening in Chu and felt complicated feelings of frustration in his heart. Based on his intelligence, of course he knew that his father had concealed some matters from him, all of which were of great import.

But now, he couldn't even step out of the Emperor Star Academy. The members of the Royal Clan were all watching him closely.

Currently, the pressure caused to him and Qin Yao by the Royal Clan was shouldered by the Emperor Star Academy.

But now, the Royal Clan wanted to deal with the Emperor Star Academy. This uncontrollable variable that was the Emperor Star Academy had already become a thorn in the eye of the Royal Clan.

.....

In one of the states of the Grand Xia Empire, the Qingzhou State, home of the Nine Mystical Palace. Today, there were many from the Nine Mystical Palace who mounted their demonic beasts, heading towards the Chu Country.

Other than the Nine Mystical Palace, the Qingzhou State still had other transcendent powers. One example of that was the Greencloud Pavilion.

The tip of the Greencloud Pavilion rose straight up above, almost touching the clouds. The Greencloud Pavilion was situated above nine towering mountain peaks and consisted numerous grand halls standing erect among the clouds, resembling an immortal realm.

At this moment, in some location of the Greencloud Pavilion, a young lady stood there. This young lady had a grandeur of nobility and appeared cool and elegant. Although she was young, she emitted incomparable charisma.

“Miss, do you have any commands for me?” A person stood before a young lady as he respectfully asked.

“Investigate the Nine Mystical Palace. Find out if there’s a small country named Chu under their administration. If there is, I want you to give me a full detailed report about this person named Qin Wentian.” The young lady was Meng Qianyu. That fellow snatched the warbeast spirit ranked number nine from the eyes of so many people, so it could be said that his luck was good. However, his actions and demeanor also caused her to be exceptionally interested; she wondered if he would enter the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds ever again.

AGM 159 – A Visit

After the yearly day of offerings passed, the Chu Country welcomed the start of a new year.

However, at the start of this new year, the citizens of Chu weren't as peaceful as before. The majority of the citizens were embroiled in violence as struggles of all forms of intensity broke out in Chu.

As for the unruly, powerful troops stationed near the borders of Chu, many of them had already begun to raise flags of rebellion against Chu. No one would have expected that such torrential waves of unrest, turmoil and chaos would rock the country of Chu in a mere short few days, just right after the new year.

The authority to govern Chu was wavering as though it was ready to collapse at any moment.

Naturally, there were those with sharper senses who could already tell that the wars of flames would rage through the entire country in a few days' worth of time. These happenings surely weren't something that happened overnight. Behind this chaos, there should have been preparations that had been carefully planned out throughout the span of several years. The moment those in the dark passed down the commands, all subterfuge would be abandoned as the troops of the rebels would openly attack the cities in Chu, leaving the citizens of Chu untouched and sparing the Chu troops that surrendered. Their only target was the Chu Dragon Guards, who were directly under the command of the royal clan.

In this cultivation-oriented world, those who cultivates weren't very concerned about who ruled which country.

The royal clan was the strongest power within a country. But even so, nobody cared about who had the authority to rule or not. As long as the ruler did not impede their movements, the cultivators could care less. If the ruler somehow infuriated the cultivators of a particular country, their authority to rule would also be shaken if the cultivators were to join hands.

Even when the flames of war were raging strong in the various cities around Chu, talented youths still rushed towards the royal capital of Chu.

This was because all the great martial academies in Chu had started recruiting. This was an opportunity that the young talented cultivators had all been waiting for. Compared to who the authority to rule ended up with, they would naturally be more worried about their own future.

And thus, to some of the extremely talented youth, the choice between enrolling in either the Royal Academy or the Emperor Star Academy became a problem. After the merger between the Royal Academy and the Godly General Martial Palace, their overall level of strength stood shoulder by shoulder, on par with the Emperor Star Academy. And now, the competition and struggle between the two academies was already public knowledge.

The young men and women of Chu gathered at the boundary of

Chu's royal capital as a piece of news was spread from the royal capital.

Today, after the merger, the elites of the Royal Academy would be paying the Emperor Star Academy a visit. Such a piece of news instantly shook the entire royal capital, attracting the attention of countless gazes. This visit was of extreme importance to the choice of the younger cultivators.

Today, Qin Wentian ended his closed door seclusion. Although Francis delivered plenty of valuable resources to him, it was still insufficient for him to use them to cultivate his Fiend Transformation Art.

Cultivating in the Fiend Transformation Technique required an extremely harsh, almost astronomical number of demonic cores. However, one good news that made Qin Wentian happy was that he discovered his body was exceptionally suitable to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art. It was as though this particular cultivation art had been tailor-made for him. His blood seemingly boiled with an unknown sense of excitement.

Qin Wentian created a Divine Inscription Painting as well as a letter that he sent to the Divine Weapon Pavilion. He believed that his Divine Inscription Painting should be able to aid him in obtaining the cultivation resources he needed.

After walking to the center of the courtyard, Qin Wentian suddenly drew in a deep breath of fresh air. A white blur of shadows flashed past, and the blurry silhouette suddenly jumped into his bosom.

“Little fellow, did you miss me?” Qin Wentian rubbed Little Rascal on its head as he smiled.

The large eyes of the snowy puppy gazed at Qin Wentian. It licked his face, appearing extremely adorable.

“Wentian.” Upon seeing Qin Wentian ended his seclusion, Qin Chuan and Qin Yao immediately came over.

“Father, Sister.” Qin Wentian smiled. After seeing Qin Chuan’s tightly knitted brows, he couldn’t help but ask, “Father, is there something wrong?”

“Wentian, during these few days when you entered closed door seclusion, there were many things that happened in Chu.” Qin Yao pulled Qin Wentian to a seat as they sat down before filling Qin Wentian with the information of what happened during these past few days.

After hearing Qin Yao’s words, great waves appeared in Qin Wentian’s heart before subsiding.

“Seems like Grandpa Qin made his preparations long ago.” Qin Wentian sighed. During the past year, he had always been working hard, wanting to save his father and grandpa out from imprisonment. But in reality, there was no need for him to make any moves at all. Even if he didn’t intervene, nothing would have happened to Qin Wu and Qin Chuan.

“Wentian, regarding these plans, I have no idea as well. Your grandpa kept many things from me.” Qin Chuan sighed.

“The struggle for power, he has no choice as well. If our ancestor Qin Wu had really been a victim of Chu back then, if Grandpa didn’t do what he did, our Qin Residence would have been slaughtered on a whim. This was what a true hero should do.” Qin Wentian murmured.

“There’s something fishy behind the death of our ancestor. If not, based on the capabilities of your grandpa, there’s no way he would be able to convince so many powers to rebel. Only our ancestor back then had this kind of prestige.” Qin Chuan sighed again.

“Mhm, the lives of mankind should be like the blaze of a firework and with a clear conscious. How could anyone live a life as someone’s puppet?” Qin Wentian smiled. The royal clan of Chu didn’t have good character.

“Yes, if our Qin Residence didn’t rebel, we would only be awaiting death.” Qin Chuan stood up as he exclaimed with the aura of a hero. The loyalty of their ancestor wasn’t that important to him. First, the suspicious death of his ancestor Qin Wu, followed by the evacuation of their Qin Clan to Sky Harmony City, as well as the suppression from all the other powers. This was already a case of killing the hounds after all the hares have been hunted. They might as well just rebel and get on with it.

At this moment, footsteps drifted from outside the courtyard. Qin Wentian shifted his gaze over, only to see Fan Le approaching. Upon seeing Qin Wentian, Fan Le let out a joyful shout, “BOSS, you’ve finally finished your closed door seclusion. Chu Tianjiao wants to bring people to pay a visit to our Emperor Star Academy today. It’s said that the purpose of his visit is to bring sister Qin Yao away. This piece of trash is just too arrogant; what dogshit visit, he obviously intends to provoke us.”

“Snowcloud is also ridiculous. Who is Sister Qin Yao to them? Do they think they can take her away just by saying it? To think they still wanted to use paying a visit to the Emperor Star Academy as an excuse.” Rage burned in Qin Wentian’s heart. Don’t even mention the fact that the Crown Prince of Snowcloud betrayed Qin Yao. Even if the betrayal didn’t occur, Qin Yao was also unwilling to be with him. Could it be that just because of his face, and the pride of Snowcloud, he intended to force Qin Yao to comply?”

Who did Xiao [Lù](#) think he was?

“That’s what I think as well. How arrogant is he? Let’s hope our Emperor Star Academy snubs their spirit. Boss, let’s go and have a look.” Fan Le exclaimed.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“I’m coming as well.” Qin Yao walked forward and pulled Qin Wentian’s hands along.

Qin Wentian gazed at Qin Yao as he smiled, “Sure, who does the

Crown Prince of Snowcloud thinks he is? How could he be worthy of my sister?”

“Yup, my brother in the future would be many times more outstanding compared to the Crown Prince of Snowcloud.” The smile on Qin Yao’s face had traces of mischievousness in it.

An expression of gratification appeared on the countenance of Qin Chuan when he witnessed how close Qin Wentian and Qin Yao were. He was very satisfied. Even though Qin Wentian was his adopted son, Qin Wentian’s status in his heart didn’t lose out to Qin Yao’s; he was akin to a real son of his.

Chu Tianjiao brought members of the Royal Academy after the merger to pay a visit. Since everyone already knew about this, the Emperor Star Academy naturally didn’t reject. On the contrary, they opened their doors wide as they welcomed the guests.

Since there were people intending to provoke them, they could only respond in kind.

In the central arena of the Emperor Star Academy, there was already a crowd gathered over there. Many students were discussing fervently below. Today, they saw many elite Yuanfu seniors appearing. Usually, these seniors would rarely appear in the grounds of the academy, but today, many of them stood there as a testament showing the amount of pressure the new Royal Academy was putting on the Emperor Star Academy.

In the distance, a line of silhouettes slowly approached. These

people were all youths about 20 years of age, and each of them had an extraordinary demeanor. When they walked together, a sense of destiny seemed to surround them, emitting a formidable surge of aura.

Those who knew of the situation understood that those who came today, not only were they the elites of the new Royal Academy, there were also experts and geniuses from Snowcloud. Not only that, there were even some elites from the Nine Mystical Palace within the group.

This naturally put tremendous pressure on the Emperor Star Academy. At this moment, Old Gu sat atop the spectator stand and had his brows furrowed as he stared at the slowly approaching silhouettes. This time around, things were not looking good.

The Emperor Star Academy would find it hard to deal with such an entourage.

“Wentian, you are here.” At this moment, Old Gu noticed Qin Wentian’s arrival, and he involuntarily smiled.

Qin Wentian could be said to be one of the most monstrous elites he had ever witnessed ever since the time Old Gu was in the academy. Naturally, he would favor Qin Wentian.

“Old man Gu.” Qin Wentian nodded in respect as he walked towards him. Upon nearing him, Qin Wentian respectfully bowed once he saw Mustang. “Teacher.”

“Come, sit beside me.” Old Gu laughed, as he beckoned Qin Wentian over. The crowd below could only sighed in envy and admiration. Currently, Qin Wentian’s position within the academy had already exceeded that of the Elders. Back then, following the assassination attempt, the Elder Janus was slaughtered on the spot as a warning to those who would dare to move against Qin Wentian.

“Wentian shall be impolite then.” Qin Wentian humbly stated as he sat beside Old Gu.

“I’m actually waiting to see when it would be your time to be impolite.” Old Gu stroked his beard as he laughed, “That granddaughter of mine is too mischievous. When will you help me to rein her in?”

“Er...” Qin Wentian was stunned as he blinked rapidly.

“What? Are you unwilling to?” Old Gu exclaimed in mock anger.

“No, I’m willing, I’m willing to.” Qin Wentian hurriedly added.

“Haha, since this is the case, this means you’ve agreed. I will tell my granddaughter about this someday.” Old Gu continued, causing the countenance of Qin Wentian to freeze, followed by a bitter laugh. It seemed that he had just fallen into a trap..

“Old Gu, you are really...” Qin Wentian was speechless.

“What’s wrong with that? From my perspective, Wentian, your temperament matches Miss Mo really well.” Qin Yao, who was standing at the side, laughed.

“Yes, your sister agrees with me too.” Old Gu also laughed. His tightly knitted brows finally relaxed.

Chu Tianjiao from the Royal Academy hoped that the Elders of Emperor Star Academy were still doing well.

At this moment, the sound of a voice drifted over. Momentarily, the joy Old Gu felt, was disrupted, only to see a cold expression on his face as he shifted his gaze over, looking at the silhouettes who, at this moment, had already arrived at the bottom of the spectator stands.

All these people harboured malicious intent, but despite of this, they still had their etiquette. All of them gave a bow in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, indicating their respect to their Elders.

“May I ask the 3rd Prince, for what reason are you visiting the Emperor Star Academy today?” Old Gu stared at Chu Tianjiao and asked in a clear voice.

“The Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lǜ, is here to welcome Qin Yao back to Snowcloud in glory. However, he suffered setbacks time and time again because of the Emperor Star Academy. Thus, we had no choice but to organise a visit. we hoped that the Elders of the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t make things difficult for

him and spoil the relationship between Chu and Snowcloud; However, I understand that my words are light and are insufficient to influence the decisions of the Elders. Thus, I could only bring some of my fellow disciples from the same sect, hoping to receive pointers and guidance from the Emperor Star Academy.”

Chu Tianjiao politely spoke, his words watertight, without any flaws. He was here in the capacity of the 3rd Prince of Chu, as well as in the name of the Royal Academy to ask for guidance.

AGM 160 – Issuing Challenges To Five Yuanfu

Old Gu stared right at Chu Tianjiao as he laughed, “Your Highness, I don’t really understand your words. Xiao Lǚ wanted to fetch Qin Yao back to Snowcloud in glory, but did Qin Yao agree?”

“How can marriage matters of the Crown Prince be a joke? Since there was a prior agreement, even if Qin Yao changed her mind now, she would still have to return to Snowcloud with him before anything else.” Chu Tianjiao calmly replied.

“Do you mean that if Qin Yao disagrees, Snowcloud will forcibly make her into Xiao Lǚ’s concubine? Not only that, will Chu be Snowcloud’s accomplice?” Old Gu countered. “This old me here has lived for so long, but this is still the first time I’ve heard such filthy conduct being packaged into something that sounds so righteous. And what’s more, our Crown Prince of Chu was the one who said the words. Has the royal clan of Chu declined that much?”

Old Gu’s words were extremely sharp, especially that last sentence of his—it was as though he was condemning Chu for their current actions, subtly hinting at the rumours about Chu killing the Wu King. His words placed a huge hat on Chu Tianjiao’s head. The surrounding people couldn’t help but comment in their hearts that the more aged a ginger was, the more spicy it would be.

Chu Tianjiao didn’t expect Old Gu’s counter to be so sharp and straight to the point. A cold light flashed in his eyes as he stated, “Old Gu’s words left me speechless indeed. Such conduct! How

could matters of marriage be nothing but a joke? Hearing the words straight from the mouth of the most respected Elder in the Emperor Star Academy similarly made me blush with shame.”

“What nonsense, when did I ever have a marriage engagement with Xiao Lǔ?” Qin Yao, upon seeing how Chu Tianjiao kept harping on her engagement with Xiao Lǔ, involuntarily replied in rage. “I’ve only agreed to interact with Xiao Lǔ, but in reality we don’t even have a close relationship between us. From your words, I’ve already become something like an accessory to him; how utterly ridiculous.”

Old Gu coldly snorted as he continued, “Chu Tianjiao, have you heard clearly?”

“The main point was that the people of Snowcloud already knew of the marriage between Qin Yao and Prince Xiao Lǔ. This is already sufficient to prove my point.”

“What a load of bullshit.” Unable to bear it any longer, Qin Wentian called out. “According to the logic of 3rd Highness, if I start a rumour here today saying that the princess of Chu had a marriage engagement with me, and the second day, this piece of news is known by everyone in Chu, does that mean that the princess of Chu is already mine?”

“Impudent. What is your status, and who do you think you are? How are you worthy of the princess?” Sikong Mingyue’s gaze was as sharp as a sword as he directly refuted Qin Wentian. “And what status does Crown Prince Xiao Lǔ have? The news of Qin Yao and Crown Prince is already known to all. How can she not return with

us to Snowcloud?”

“Hur hur, that is merely your perspective. In my eyes, who the f*ck is the princess of Chu? Who the f*ck is the Crown Prince of Snowcloud? They are not worth a fart, how can they be compared to my sister?” Qin Wentian gazed at Sikong Mingyue, as he coldly laughed. “And as for you, bloody loser, you still have the face to speak in front of me?”

After this, a glint of contempt flashed in Qin Wentian’s eyes. Qin Wentian had seen the memory fragments of the tiny Astral-Being, had seen the grand fantasy of that mysterious green-robed elder, and had also received the inheritance of the Azure Emperor by competing with others in the Spirit Beast testing grounds, widening his perspective. How could he still be awed by Chu or Snowcloud? The world out there was so immense that the Crown Princes of both Chu and Snowcloud could really be considered nothing. In the other places out there, the transcendent powers of the nine states, their statuses were nothing but crap, like that of an ordinary commoner.

To him, the word ‘genius’ no longer meant the same to him. These ‘geniuses’ in front of him were even weaker compared to Luo Qianqiu. And if Luo Qianqiu himself were to be compared to those he met in the testing grounds, he would only be considered someone ordinary.

This way, he could remind himself that he must not lose himself in arrogance or flaunt himself as a genius.

He, Qin Wentian, was merely one person in a world full of so

many others. He didn't have the qualities to underestimate anyone, but also had no need to look up to anyone. Step by step, footprint by footprint, he would trudge along on his own path of cultivation using his determination and will.

Sikong Mingyue's killing intent gushed out after being insulted in the open by Qin Wentian. He dashed towards Qin Wentian as he shouted in anger, "Come, fight me once more."

"You are not worthy." Qin Wentian serenely gazed at Sikong Mingyue. A look of pity flickered in his eyes, disdainfully looking at him. Seeing such a look in the eyes of Qin Wentian caused Sikong Mingyue's killing intent to surge even higher.

Xiao Lǔ gazed at Sikong Mingyue as he waved his hands, signalling for Sikong Mingyue to be quiet. Only now did Sikong Mingyue manage to suppress his boiling anger and curb his killing intent. Chu Tianjiao continued as though there had been no interruptions, "There's no point in talking any further. Today the Royal Academy paid a visit to the Emperor Star Academy for only one purpose. These five Yuanfu Realm cultivators wanted to spar against the elite students of the Emperor Star Academy and exchange pointers."

"Why I don't see the five Yuanfu students from your Royal Academy?" Old Gu swept his gaze at Chu Tianjiao.

"Ye Wuque, 1st level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against Qiu Mo from the Emperor Star Academy." Ye Wuque spoke. He was ranked 5th among the 10 prodigies of Chu while Qiu Mo was 4th.

“Wang Teng, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Greencloud Association, Lin Hua.” Another silhouette stepped out as his intent to battle surged, immediately issuing a challenge to Lin Hua of the Emperor Star Academy.

“1st Sword, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against guest elder Rainy of the Emperor Star Academy.”

“Wu Chong, 2nd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Asura Faction, Du Yidao.”

“Xiao Lan, 3rd level of Yuanfu, requests to battle against the leader of the Heavenly Demon Association, Xanxus.”

Standing aside Chu Tianjiao, the five silhouettes all spoke. In an instant, a mighty surge of pressure blasted out as their intent to battle soared to the Heavens

The five of them directly spoke out, issuing their challenges to those who had the same level of cultivation as them. Not only that, those who they challenged all had high standings within the Emperor Star Academy. Three of them were none other than the leaders of the associations and faction in the Emperor Star Academy, another one was ranked 4th among the 10 prodigies of Chu, and the last was a guest elder of the Emperor Star Academy.

“When did 1st Sword become a member of your Royal Academy? And why have I never heard the names of Xiao Lan and Wang Teng before?” The countenance of Old Gu turned sharp.

“Since the Royal Academy merged with the Godly General Martial Palace, there would naturally be people Old Gu is not familiar with. And as for 1st Sword, it’s because today’s business is related to Snowcloud. I’m unwilling to bully the Emperor Star Academy, and thus, both Xiao Lǜ and I won’t compete today.” Chu Tianjiao slowly enunciated his words, causing the pupils of the crowd to contract. What an arrogant speech.

Indeed, Chu Tianjiao was ranked 2nd in the 10 prodigies of Snowcloud. With the addition of Xiao Lǜ, who was one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud, there was no need to doubt their power.

If both Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lǜ entered the battlefield, they would definitely cause more headaches to the Emperor Star Academy.

However, both of them actually chose not to battle.

This was a battle among Yuanfu realm experts. Regardless if they were from the Emperor Star Academy or from the Royal Academy, Yuanfu realm students could most certainly be considered the backbone of their respective academy. Students at this level were the true elites of the academies.

From a certain viewpoint, the scale and scope of this battle would definitely not lose out to the Jun Lin Banquet. Five against five, all extraordinary opponents.

Ye Wuque, one of the Yuanfu experts within the 10 prodigies.

1st Sword, the head of the three swords in Snowcloud.

Wu Chong, a genius disciple in the Godly General Martial Palace.

As for Wang Teng and Xiao Lan, they were not simple either. Especially Xiao Lan, who was already at the 3rd level of Yuanfu and actually dared issue a challenge to the leader of the Emperor Star Academy's Heavenly Demon Association.

“Emperor Star Academy, do you dare accept our challenge?” Chu Tianjiao's crisp voice sounded out, resonating in the air.

They had already investigated the details regarding the cultivation levels of the elites from the Emperor Star Academy. Since they dared to issue a challenge to the five of them, they would surely have a certain level of confidence in their own success.

The gazes of the students in the Emperor Star Academy were all riveted on the Elders on the spectator stands. As things stood now, how could they reject?

“Are all of you willing to battle?” Old Gu didn't make the decisions for the elites of the Emperor Star Academy.

“Let's fight.”

Only to see Qiu Mo walking out as he appeared on the arena. His sharp gaze was directed at Ye Wuque. Since he was ranked higher

than Ye Wuque within the ranks of the 10 prodigies, he had no reason not to accept his challenge.

“Ye Wuque, ranked 5th. Don’t you know that the rankings before you are hard to displace?” Qiu Mo gazed at Ye Wuque as he indifferently added.

Ye Wuque looked back at him, his countenance calm. After which, he released his 3rd Astral Soul, which was cloaked in a golden radiance.

“Golden corona, it must be from the 4th Heavenly Layer.” Qiu Mo froze upon seeing this sight. Not only did Ye Wuque successfully open his 3rd Astral Gate, the Astral Soul he condensed was actually from the 4th Heavenly Layer.

This Astral Soul was in the form of a golden sword. Its resplendent glow was so sharp that it was bone-piercing.

Psssst! A terrifyingly monstrous sharpness erupted forth completely. Ye Wuque slowly strode out, emitting an exceptionally powerful sense of pressure that pressed against Qiu Mo. Behind Ye Wuque, a pair of silvery wings were formed, and the light they emitted was extremely blinding. This was his 2nd Astral Soul, and after stepping into Yuanfu, his previously illusory pair of wings had transformed into something closer to reality.

For Stellar Martial Cultivators, after they broke through to Yuanfu, their arterial pathways would transformed into a whirlpool, and their Astral Energy turned into liquid form. Every

droplet of Yuan liquid was formed through the condensation of immense amounts of Astral Energy. These Yuan droplets would then appear within the Yuan Palace inside the body of the Stellar Martial Cultivator as he built up the form of a complete Yuan Palace and began to nurture a Stellar Array.

The amount of Astral Energy a Yuanfu realm cultivator could use far surpassed that of Arterial Circulation. This was a qualitative evolution.

With immense amounts of Astral Yuan Energy, it would naturally support the cultivator in executing even more innate techniques. Even their Astral Souls would seem as though they were more real. Once the Stellar Array of the individual cultivator was fully nurtured, the cultivator would then step into the Heavenly Dipper Realm and have an Astral Nova, which was manifested from a 'real' Astral Soul instead of something illusory.

Chi... The moment Qiu Mo lost focus, Ye Wuque instantly stepped out. In the blink of an eye, inexhaustible amounts of golden colored sharp swords gathered together as they amalgamated into a gigantic Heaven Punishment Sword, slashing towards Qiu Mo. The aura the sword emitted was golden in colour as well. The might contained within was akin to that of a terrible, terrible storm.

An Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer, in addition to its augmentation effect, was undoubtedly terrifying when used to attack.

Qiu Mo released his Astral Soul as well, directly facing Ye

Wuque's attack. However, he soon discovered that every defense he mounted was easily destroyed by Ye Wuque's attacks. A heavy sense of disappointment flickered in his eyes. The position of 4th prodigy was going to have a change in ownership.

Towards the end, the attacks of the two opponents clashed together. With only a single strike, Qiu Mo was blasted off the arena, causing everyone in the crowd to be thunderstruck.

Was the disparity in power levels between the 4th and 5th prodigy that great? Not only that, the 5th prodigy was even stronger.

The Emperor Star Academy actually lost the first battle.

Ye Wuque turned his gaze in the direction of the spectator stand as he bowed. "I won only through a fluke."

After which, he retreated and returned to his original spot. However, as the sound of his words drifted to the ears of the crowd, the words became extremely ear-piercing and contained extreme sarcasm.

Translator's Notes:

* the more aged a ginger is, the more spicy it will be → Chinese idiom meaning that the older one was, the more proficient one would be in dealing with situations

* 'Yuanfu' means Yuan Palace

AGM 161 – Crushing Defeat

How could Ye Wuque's victory be considered a fluke? That battle of his had obviously been won overwhelmingly.

Ranked fourth out of the ten prodigies, Qiu Mo hadn't been that different from Ye Wuque of the past. But now that Ye Wuque condensed his 3rd Astral Soul, Qiu Mo was left far behind.

Ye Wuque retreated out of the arena, only to see 1st Sword stepping up. A pressure caused by monstrous sword intent could be heard whistling around him.

Although Ye Wuque had also used swords for his attack, he wasn't a pure sword cultivator. 1st Sword was different; judging from the aura his body emitted, one could clearly feel that he was a powerful, pure sword cultivator.

The attacks of sword cultivators were absolutely dominating and incomparably sharp.

Rain slowly strode up the arena. She was clad in white and was young and beautiful, about 20 years of age. In the academy, she had plenty of suitors, but up until now, there wasn't a single person who had successfully wooed such a outstanding beauty.

"I await your guidance." 1st Sword bowed to Rain. Although these people were here for provocation, they still had their manners, giving no opportunities for others to castigate them.

“Please.” Rain returned the bow, in a gentle and graceful manner. It was hard to imagine that such a beautiful woman like her was actually tremendously powerful in terms of combat ability.

1st Sword slowly walked forwards. In an instant, his Sword-type Astral Soul burst into radiance. It was a tri-colored sword, glowing with a dazzling light in mid air. It was incomparably resplendent, as though the brilliance it exuded wanted to blind the eyes of everyone in the crowd.

“3rd Astral Soul, All-are-Swords.” The gazes of the crowd stiffened in surprise. No wonder he was the leader of the Three Swords of Snowcloud. His attachment towards swords was extraordinary.

The tri-colored Sword Astral Soul granted one of the highest strength boosts in terms of attacks.

Rain also released her own Astral Soul. Meteor showers suddenly fell from the skies.

“Her 3rd Astral Soul is actually from the 4th Heavenly Layer!” Voices filled with startlement rang out as surprise painted the countenances of the crowd. Especially on the faces of many from the Emperor Star Academy. They couldn’t help but exclaim in surprise.

“Senior Rain is so powerful but so low profile.”

“Senior Rain is many times more powerful than Qiu Mo. Qiu Mo had a somewhat undeserved reputation.” Many people began discussing in low voices. Qiu Mo’s countenance turned extremely unsightly as the sound of their discussions drifted into his ears.

Even more interesting was that Rain actually chose a Meteor-type Astral Soul. With her in the center, rains of meteor showers fell about her, creating an area-of-effect.

Simultaneously, a pair of pure white beautiful wings appeared on the back of Rain. At this moment, Rain seemed akin to an angelic being from the Heavens and was many times more striking compared to back when Ye Wuque revealed his wings.

“How beautiful...” A bunch of young girls exclaimed.

But there were also many who were worried for Rain. How could her attacks be powerful enough considering the types of her chosen Astral Souls?

1st Sword stepped forwards. Sword light slashed out, lacerating everything in his path. The tri-colored sword glowed with three stream of different coloured sword light as it slashed out towards Rain.

Rain’s silhouette flickered unceasingly as a rain-screen shrouded her within. As the three streams of sword light descended, she stood there within her rain-screen, unharmed.

“Her footwork.: Qin Wentian noticed that Rain’s legs was glowing with Astral Light. He had once attended a lecture by Rain. Back then, he discovered that Rain had many unique concepts when it comes to cultivation, and it was only after her lecture did Qin Wentian manage to comprehend the method of spitting out sword light and unleashing his palm attacks with his foot.

Seeing how ferocious 1st Sword’s attacks were and how Rain seemed to be invulnerable, Qin Wentian had a faint feeling that in this battle, Rain would most likely be able to emerge victorious.

Indeed, the attacks of 1st Sword got increasingly flustered, akin to a raging storm of wind and rain, pressing so intently towards Rain that she didn’t even have the space to breath. However, at the final moment, one of his attacks appeared as though it had finally successfully hit Rain. But soon after, he discovered that he was sorely mistaken. The body of the Rain which he had struck dissipated into motes of Astral Light as yet another figure appeared within that previous rain-screen.

“Is this a variant Illusion-type Astral Soul?” THe crowd had disbelief on their countenances as they witnessed Rain defeating 1st Sword. From the start to the end, 1st Sword seized the initiative and controlled the tempo of the match, but despite of this, his attacks did not manage to truly threaten Rain.

“I won by a fluke.” Rain retreated a few steps and politely added. Akin to Ye Wuque, her polite words also seemed to contained sarcasm within them.

Wasn't these people very arrogant? They still lost in the end.

Wang Teng appeared on the arena as a terrifying aura gushed out from him. For this battle, his opponent was Lin Hua, leader of the Greencloud Association.

Qin Wentian had a pretty good impression of Lin Hua. Previously, if it were not for the appearance of Lin Hua, he might really have killed Luo Qianqiu. And if he really did so, based on the might of the Nine Mystical Palace, the academy wouldn't have wanted to shield him.

But the moment he saw Wang Teng's attacks, Qin Wentian already knew that Lin Hua would be defeated in this battle.

Qin Wentian wasn't the only one who had this feeling. As the crowd witnessed the clashes, their hearts couldn't help but shudder at Wang Teng's combat prowess. He was akin to an immensely powerful desolate beast, domineering, eradicating everything in his path. Finally, Lin Hua had no way to continue under the ever-increasing fury of Wang Teng's strikes and was defeated.

"This guy, it's as though he's a trump card prepared by Chu Tianjiao. If he fought, he would definitely win."

Qin Wentian gazed at Chu Tianjiao's incomparably calm countenance. Chu Tianjiao appeared free from all worries, as though success was already in the bag. Since he dared to come here

today, he would surely not return in defeat.

The 4th battle, Wu Chong versus Du Yidao, leader of the Asura Faction.

Back then, Luo Qianqiu had also been a member of the Asura Faction. However, other than the Knight's Association, the students of the academy recognised and evaluated everything based on accomplishments, ignoring their status and position.

The Asura Faction placed an emphasis on insane training and obtaining strength regardless of all methods. They would unhesitating throw themselves in danger to grow stronger. But in such a scene, they would undoubtedly stand on the side of the Emperor Star Academy.

Wu Chong was a famous cultivator from the Godly General Martial Palace and had three different Beast-type Astral Souls, granting him an extremely high degree of augmentation in his attacks. However, Du Yidao wasn't that bad either. His attacks were all extremely vicious, and capable of ending a life with every strike. It was as though he fought with no regards to his life, the embodiment of the word ruthlessness.

However, Wu Chong's battle intent and ruthlessness didn't lose out to Du Yidao

The Godly General Martial Palace was situated in the depths of the Dark Forest. The people there were all talents nurtured by the military from a young age. Naturally, ruthlessness was already

built into their character. The students there treated the Dark Forest as their training grounds and had life and death battles in their training sessions almost every day. Their cruelty in training didn't lose out in the slightest when compared to those from the Asura Faction.

Upon seeing the multitude of wounds appearing on both of their bodies as a result of the crazed and frenzied battle, several people in the crowd silently admired them.

And ultimately, with a roar of rage, Wu Chong finally suppressed Du Yidao with the flaring strength of his Beast-type Astral Souls, blasting him off the arena and claiming victory for the 4th battle.

In this case, out of the five battles proposed, the Royal Academy had already won three of them.

Their challenges resulted them in obtaining a glorious achievement.

From now onwards, people in the Royal Academy would say that the Royal Academy was stronger than the Emperor Star Academy.

This was their second objective in coming other than settling the matter of Xiao Lǔ and Qin Yao.

If the Royal Academy wanted to deal with the Emperor Star Academy, naturally they wouldn't brazenly wage an all-out war with it. They could only adopt a method like this, slowly peeling

away the layers of perceived invincibility the masses had regarding the Emperor Star Academy.

It would be impossible to bring the Emperor Star Academy down overnight.

“Do we still need to continue with the last battle?” Chu Tianjiao turned his gaze towards the spectator stand as he calmly inquired.

The sound of his voice was extremely unpleasant to hear when it drifted into the eardrums of those from the Emperor Star Academy. Was there still a need to continue battling?

They had already won three out of the five battles. From a certain perspective, they were already the victors.

“Naturally, we will continue.” The countenance of Old Gu was unsightly. The leader of the Heavenly Demon Association, Xanxus, walked up the arena.

Xanxus was a 3rd level Yuanfu Realm cultivator, and in the Emperor Star Academy, those who broke through to the next level had already left the academy.

From a certain perspective, this meant that among the students, Xanxus was the pinnacle of strength in the Emperor Star Academy.

For even stronger students, they had already left Chu in pursuit of higher cultivation.

Strictly speaking, this battle no longer held any significance in victory or defeat. He fought for the honor and glory of the Emperor Star Academy.

Xiao Lan strode up. This unknown cultivator had never appeared within the Royal Academy before. He lifted his head, gazing at Xanxus. His gaze gave off an extremely uncomfortable feeling to those who saw it, sharper even than the sharpest swords.

“You are not my opponent. Roll off the stage.”

Xiao Lan calmly spoke, causing a glint of extreme coldness to flicker in Xanxus’s eyes.

He was the leader of the Heavenly Demon Association. In the academy, his status and position was extraordinary. The Heavenly Demon Association was the first association to be formed after the Emperor Star Academy was founded, and could be considered a symbol of the Emperor Star Academy.

But now, they were actually being humiliated by others.

Not only that, for the five cultivators Chu Tianjiao brought here today, the four in front were all polite despite their high level of martial prowess. However, the 5th of them had a character that was completely opposite from the previous four.

Savage and arrogant. It was as though he had intentionally

wanted to humiliate the Emperor Star Academy.

“We will only know after we battle.” Xanxus voice was extremely cold as he replied.

BZZZZ! A raging wind billowed past as Xiao Lan’s silhouette transformed into a stream of light. As their eyes met, Xanxus only felt himself falling into a mysterious reality. He couldn’t even lift his hand to defend in the slightest.

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, someone stood up as astonishment clouded his features.

BOOM! A thunderous sound echoed, breaking apart the silence of the night. An instant later, Xanxus’s chest was lacerated. Blood flowed out unceasingly.

“Scram!” Xiao Lan sent out a palm strike, blasting Xanxus off the arena. Old Gu’s silhouette flickered as he appeared behind Xanxus, catching him before Xanxus was slammed to the ground. He asked, “Are you alright?”

“Teacher, I’m sorry, I made you disappointed.” Xanxus apologetically gazed at Old Gu.

So it turns out that Xanxus, the leader of the Heavenly Demon Association, was actually a student of Old Gu.

“A loss is a loss, no big deal.” Old Gu consoled Xanxus, but an

extremely sharp light flickered in the depths of his eyes. Earlier, when Xiao Lan struck out, his attacks actually contained pressure that could affect one's consciousness. Such a person was indeed extremely terrifying.

At the very least, in the Emperor Star Academy, there wasn't a character such as Xiao Lan.

“So this is all the Emperor Star Academy amounts to.” Xiao Lan icily stated, malice thick in his voice. But with such an ending, no one could dispute his words.

Four defeats in the five battles.

Today, Chu Tianjiao did his preparations well before coming over to provoke and issue challenges to the academy. If it wasn't for Rain winning a battle, their losses would have been even uglier.

But despite of her victory, their situation currently was still extremely embarrassing. Three of the leaders belonging to the four strongest student associations and faction had actually lost!

Such a pitiful ending would surely be extremely damaging to the reputation of the Emperor Star Academy.

Today, Chu Tianjiao had achieved his objective!

AGM 162 – Returning Politeness For Politeness

Chu Tianjiao stood up. Although his side just won a major victory, his countenance remained unchanged, with no hints of complacency. On the contrary, he bowed towards the Elders of the Emperor Star Academy as he stated, “Respected Elders, Chu Tianjiao of the junior generation has some things he wishes to say.”

Old Gu gently let down Xanxus as he glanced at Chu Tianjiao. This person was neither proud nor hot-tempered and had great talent. Indeed, he could be considered a precious gem.

A pity, his ambitions were too wild. He wanted to swallow Chu whole, ridding it of all other powers, allowing the Royal Clan of Chu to cover the skies with one hand.

Without the Emperor Star Academy and the resistance of the Qin Clan, the imperial authority of the Royal Clan was absolute.

“Victory and defeat are common on the cultivation path. As for the battles today, the students of my Emperor Star Academy will bear this in mind and will continue to work even harder in their cultivation.” Regardless of what he thought in his heart, Old Gu wouldn’t allow the academy to appear as a sore loser. At the very least, Chu Tianjiao’s words were beautifully spoken, yet, everyone knew of his rapacious ambitions.

“Chu Tianjiao admires the vision of Elder Gu. But for the matter

regarding Qin Yao, I have to stress it again and hope that Elder would reconsider allowing Miss Qin to accompany Crown Prince Xiao Lǔ back to Snowcloud.” Chu Tianjiao’s tone was polite, neither forceful nor overbearing.

“As long as the Elders of the Academy don’t obstruct us of the junior generation, we will take her back with us.” Chu Tianjiao spoke again.

“In this case, do you mean you will resort to force?” A glint of coldness flashed in Old Gu’s eyes.

“We don’t dare to. However, this is originally a matter among the junior generations, so it would be good if we handle it ourselves. Naturally, if the Elders of the Emperor Star Academy shameless make use of their numbers to obstruct the path of the junior generations, I have nothing else to say.” Chu Tianjiao placed an extremely huge hat on the head of the Emperor Star Academy. Everyone on the scene understood his intentions.

it was as though he was intentionally provoking the academy now after the Royal Academy obtained victory in the previous battles. This wasn’t about the matter of the academy blocking his path to Qin Yao, but rather the students of the academy were useless and had to depend on their seniors to bully them, the members of the junior generations.

“The logic of the 3rd Prince really made me unsure of whether should I laugh or cry.” Old Gu remarked sarcastically. “Based on your logic, after you won the battles, this gave you the right to forcibly snatch Qin Yao Away? And if the Emperor Star Academy

interferes, this meant that we the Elders are bullying the junior generations? WHAT DO YOU TAKE THE EMPEROR STAR ACADEMY AS?" Old Gu roared.

"If Elder insists on understanding it this way, Chu Tianjiao has nothing more to say. If the Emperor Star Academy still insists on their stance, I can only leave. However, wouldn't the reputation of your academy be besmirched?" Chu Tianjiao smiled.

"You merely won a few deliberately pre-arranged battles. Why do I feel as though the Royal Academy is already standing on the Emperor Star Academy's head?" Qin Wentian couldn't bear it and stepped forth. Chu Tianjiao looked humble on the surface but in reality, each of his words and actions were deliberately forceful and extremely overbearing.

"The Emperor Star Academy wasn't prepared while you guys somehow gathered a few unknown experts whom nobody has ever heard of and deliberately chose who to challenge. Do you also consider this a victory? Today, the Royal Academy paid a visit that we will return it 'politely' sooner or later. And with regards to the Emperor Star Academy, most of our Yuanfu Realm students have already graduated, so battles at the realm of Yuanfu don't really hold much persuasiveness."

Qin Wentian slowly spoke, causing the countenance of the crowd to freeze. According to Qin Wentian, it was as though he was preparing to counter with a challenge to the Royal Academy. Even the eyes of Old Gu shone with a luster after he heard Qin Wentian's words.

“On the contrary, for martial academies in Chu, Arterial Circulation cultivators are the most numerous. Don’t you feel that battle challenges at the Arterial Circulation Realm would be more appropriate? Five days from now, there will be five students at the Arterial Circulation Realm from the Emperor Star Academy paying a visit to the Royal Academy. I can guarantee that these five students are definitely not outsiders we hired from outside and would certainly be people that the Royal Academy knows.”

Qin Wentian was undoubtedly hinting that the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t be as shameless as Chu Tianjiao, hiring experts from god knows where to fight their battles.

Old Gu casted a glance at Qin Wentian and laughed. Today, the Royal Academy’s visit was to smack their faces and to destroy the reputation of the Emperor Star Academy. Qin Wentian’s suggestion was excellent, provided that they won.

After all, there were bound to be many elites after the merger between the Royal Academy and the Godly General Martial Palace.

“This suggestion is excellent.” Old Gu spoke, “The majority of our Yuanfu students have already graduated and left the academy. Indeed, there isn’t much to compare here. However, I believe that both our academies would have a huge number of those at Arterial Circulation.”

“As for the matter regarding Qin Yao, what is the stance of the Emperor Star Academy?”

“Qin Yao currently is a student of my academy. If 3rd Highness dares to say that if our Emperor Star Academy wins the battles five days from now, we would have the rights to snatch any beautiful female students without us facing interference from the Royal Academy, I have nothing else to add.” Old Gu coldly laughed. Based on Chu Tianjiao’s status, there was no way he would make such a ridiculous decision.

Chu Tianjiao went silent. He knew that he had no hopes of bringing Qin Yao away today. Naturally, he already knew before he came that it would be impossible, but still, some words had to be said on the surface. Not only that, they already achieved their objective to place the Emperor Star Academy in an embarrassing position. News of such matters would surely be spread swiftly to the entire Royal Academy, thus affecting the reputation of the Emperor Star Academy.

However, Chu Tianjiao had never expected that Qin Wentian would actually issue a challenge to the Royal Academy instead.

“Farewell.” Chu Tianjiao bowed once again before he turned and departed. Those around him mirrored his actions and strode away.

“Would the Royal Academy accept our challenge five days from now?” Qin Wentian stared at the departing back view of Chu Tianjiao as he inquired.

“Anytime, whenever you are ready.” The sound of Chu Tianjiao’s voice drifted over. Old Gu’s countenance turned heavy as he spoke to Qin Wentian who was standing beside him, “Wentian, after the merger of the two academies, in addition to them seeking help

from external experts, this matter is not going to be so simple to handle.”

“Today, they were the guests, so out of politeness, we followed their rules. Five days from now, we will be the guests instead and will set rules of our own. Why do we need to battle separately?” A sharp glint of light flickered in Qin Wentian’s eyes, causing the countenance of Old Gu to freeze. After which he patted Qin Wentian’s back. The little guy’s pressure was going to be exceptionally great.

The crowd gradually departed. And just as Chu Tianjiao had predicted, news of their Royal Academy’s previous challenge erupted and was swiftly spread to the entire Royal Capital.

The newly emerged Royal Academy wanted to make good use of their limelight after the merger to suppress the Emperor Star Academy, becoming the number one martial academy in the Royal Capital.

Indeed, this caused the hearts of many younger talents to waver. Initially, the majority of them had intended to enroll in the Emperor Star Academy a few days from now. Did they have to change their decisions?

However, there was another piece of news being disseminated. The Emperor Star Academy felt that their losses were unjust and reissued another challenge to the Royal Academy.

And the person who issued the challenge was none other than the

champion of the Jun Lin Banquet—Qin Wentian.

With Qin Wentian's combat prowess, it was indeed tough for him to find a match at Arterial Circulation. However, what about the rest? Would the odds be in the favour of the Emperor Star Academy?

Currently, Qin Wentian was in closed door seclusion again. After Francis received his letter, he followed Qin Wentian's instructions and handed the Divine Inscription Painting over to the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

The Divine Weapon Pavilion, using its fastest speed in addition to paying an astronomical price, put together all the things that Qin Wentian needed and delivered them to the Emperor Star Academy.

Among the items he needed, there were several demonic cores and an immense amount of demonic-yuan energy Yuan Meteor Stones as well as other resources that stored demonic essence. Just this batch of items that were delivered over could be said to be priceless.

However, this was merely sufficient to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art to the first level.

And not only that, these amount of resources were insufficient for him to reach the pinnacle of the first level. To achieve the complete mastery of the first level required even more resources.

And with regards to Demonic Emergence, the second level of the Fiend Transformation Art, not only would he need astronomical amounts of resources, he would also need to condense powerful Beast-type Astral Souls before he could cultivate it.

But that was something Qin Wentian only needed to worry about after he stepped into Yuanfu, and opened his 3rd Astral Gate. The current him only wanted to focus on cultivating the first level—Demonic Body.

Qin Wentian immersed himself within, completely ignoring the matters of the outside world.

.....

And as for the three greatest companies within Chu, other than the Sky Transport Network and Heaven's Wonder, the remaining one was the Heavenly Treasure Tower.

The Sky Transport Network was the greatest delivery and transport power of Chu, Heaven's Wonder was the greatest gambling establishment, while the Heavenly Treasure Tower was the biggest place where precious treasures were transacted.

There were some similarities with the Divine Weapon Pavilion and also some differences. The main component of goods the Divine Weapon Pavilion was in the market for was the sale and buying of Divine Weapons. However, the Heavenly Treasure Tower focused more on transactions of rare oddities and precious treasures.

And thus, the Heavenly Treasure Tower was also Chu's grandest auction house.

There were three levels in the Crystal Jade Auction House sanctioned by the Heavenly Treasure Tower. The entire building was bathed in resplendent light, emitting a sense of luxuriousness.

Today, regardless of whether it was the first, second or third level of the Crystal Jade Auction House, all of the seats were filled to the brim. Because, earlier, the Heavenly Treasure Tower had released a piece of news that there was going to be an item of extraordinary value up for auction. Such a news inevitably stirred the curiosity of the masses.

For items that were able to be sold in the Crystal Jade Auction Hall, there was no need to doubt their value. And hence, there were many aristocrats here today.

Zuo Yin and Murin was here, and so was Orchon. Ye Zhan also brought Liu Yan here. Autumn Snow and her friends came as well. They wanted to see the treasure that the Heavenly Treasure Tower wanted to auction away today.

Only to see that on the first level of the Crystal Jade Auction Hall, a beautiful maiden clad in transparent robes were standing atop a gigantic crystal lotus. Her beauty could only be described as stunning, and she was a feast for the eyes for the crowd.

The crystal lotus slowly rose into the air and began to hover. The

beautiful girl smiled lightly, charisma gushing forth from her. “Today, the item being auctioned is an item that came from one of the most outstanding youths in the history of the Emperor Star Academy. If it were me, however, I’d remove the section ‘one of’ from that youth’s description.”

As the sound of her voice faded, astonishment and awe could be seen on the faces of the crowd. The most outstanding youth in the history of the Emperor Star Academy? Such an introduction really did cause the crowd to be in suspense.

“When he was 16, he hadn’t stepped on the path of cultivation yet. Him at that moment, had his marriage engagement forcibly called off and was humiliated by others. However, he wasn’t dispirited and chose to give up on himself. On the contrary, when he stepped onto the pathway of cultivation, the first Astral Soul he awakened hailed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, while his 2nd Astral Soul was from the 4th Heavenly Layer. Using only the short span of a year of time, he stepped into Arterial Circulation and even created a miracle by becoming the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, defeating Luo Qianqiu and Sikong Mingyue.”

The pupils of the crowd widened. By now, they had already guessed the identity of the person the host was describing. The countenance of Autumn Snow went pale white. That sentence, “his marriage engagement forcibly called off”, wasn’t that referring to her? At this moment, she only felt a burning sensation on her face.

“Not only that, he is also one of the most elite Divine Inscriptionist in Chu, creating a Divine Imprint that even caused a

Heavenly Dipper Sovereign to hold him in awe. That was a 3rd-level Divine Inscription, and not only that, it was in the form of a Human-Type Divine Inscription Painting, never before seen in Chu.”

The maiden laughed, and the crowd sighed. Qin Wentian was outstanding indeed. Autumn Snow was thinking in her heart, if everything that happened back then didn’t happen, the guileless and pure youth back then would still be together with her.

“As for the Human-Type Divine Inscription Painting earlier, the Heavenly Dipper Sovereign Gongyang Hong spared no efforts to obtain it and even granted a promise to Mu Rou. And today, this is the second Human-Type Divine Inscription Painting created by Grandmaster Qin. The painting in my hands is a masterpiece that is unique and unmatched, even exceeding his apex creation in the past. Perhaps this will obtain the recognition of Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns once again.”

The female host continued smiling as she gazed at the crowd. Just a few words from her had successfully ignited the passion and excitement of the crowd, causing the blood of many to surge. With the tagline of ‘obtaining recognition from Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns’, this was already sufficient to drive many into a frenzy, despite her not mentioning the auction cost of the painting.

Upon seeing the female action host’s performance, An Liuyan, who was in one of the seats, had a smile on her face. It seemed like the decision to auction the painting away in the Heavenly Treasure Tower was the right decision!

AGM 163 – Airborne

On top of the transparent crystal lotus, the young maiden clad in transparent robes left little to the imagination as her actions caused many males in the audience to be palpitating with eagerness. But despite that, the moment she unfurled the painting in her hands, the attention and focus of everyone was instantly shifted to the Divine Inscription Painting.

Once again, this was a Human-type Divine Inscription Painting so vivid that it seemed incredibly lifelike and appeared to be in motion. The concept hidden within the movements caused people to be immersed in it, as though they too were in that wondrous state, their consciousness comprehending the concept.

“Yet another heaven-defying creation. It seems like Qin Wentian really is an unrivalled genius. One might argue that the first Human-type Divine Inscription Painting of his was obtained through good fortune or exceptional circumstances, created that through a stroke of luck, but upon seeing this second Human-type Divine Inscription Painting, all suspicions regarding the first painting can be scrapped away. Evidently, one can see similar traces of the first painting within the second, possessing the same kind of charm. Not only that, the sense of concept contained within this painting is even stronger when compared to the first.”

A burst of noise could be heard from a certain direction within the private room. The maiden turned her head over in the direction as she smiled, “Vice-president Zuo has good judgement. After missing the chance to obtain the first painting, I’m sure you won’t miss this chance again.”

“Vice president Zuo Yin from the Star River Association.”

On the first level, in a random corner, a young lady gazed at Autumn Snow who was currently extremely pale. “Autumn Snow, is it true that you reneged on the marriage agreement with Qin Wentian?”

Autumn Snow’s countenance was exceptionally unsightly. Based on Qin Wentian’s current status, he was not someone she could be compared to.

Not only that, the Royal Clan of Chu were waging a war against the rebels right now. But who would be the ultimate winner? If the rebels won, Qin Wentian’s status would surpass that of the current Chu Tianjiao because everyone knew that the mastermind of this rebellion was none other than the Qin Clan!

Liu Yan, who was sitting together with Ye Zhan, also felt extremely complicated in her heart. Back then, Ye Zhan had told her that she and Qin Wentian was destined to be people belonging to different levels. This actually became a reality, but the roles were reversed. How many people in the Royal Capital knew of Ye Zhan and yet how many people in the Royal Capital didn’t know of Qin Wentian?

And as for Murin, because of the matter with Qin Wentian, he had become a thorn in the eyes of Zuo Yin. Zuo Yin’s dislike could also clearly be felt by Murin. In turn, deep in his heart, he also hated this old fellow. Since Zuo Yin resented him because of a

mere Qin Wentian, then Zuo Yin shouldn't blame him for being ruthless. Of course, this was something that Murin wouldn't display out in the open. On the surface, he appeared always to be smiling, bowing frequently in apology.

And ultimately, the painting was successfully auctioned away. The winner was none other than Zuo Yin, who spent a terrifyingly astronomical price to bid for it. As the Vice President of the Star River Association, he would naturally have countless innate techniques as well as Divine Weapons. In the face of his considerable wealth, it wasn't a problem for him to obtain the painting through bids.

The act of placing Qin Wentian's Divine Inscription Painting up for auction triggered enormous waves in the hearts of many. There were actually numerous people with extraordinary backgrounds competing for it.

And just thinking of this, Autumn Snow dejectedly left the Heavenly Treasure Tower. It was a lie if she were to say that there she had no regrets. After all, Qin Wentian had never once looked down on her. It was all her fault; because of her, and Bai Qingsong's greed, everything that could have once been hers had all dissipated into the thin air. Even more important was that her current lifestyle wasn't that good. How she longed for the simple days she once had with the unsophisticated youth from back then.

And there was another reason. The current gulf was so huge, so huge to the extent that she couldn't even muster the slightest bit of jealousy.

“The hatred he feels now towards me as well as towards my Bai Clan should be so deep that it already seeps into his bones.” Autumn Snow gave a self-mocking laugh. Time and experiences were extremely marvelous things. In the short span of just a year, her entire attitude actually underwent such a huge transformation. Previously, this was something that she would have never expected would happen.

And as for Qin Wentian, he didn't know of the things that transpired in the auction house. Since he gave the Divine Weapon Pavilion free rein and allowed them to handle things on his behalf, he completely relinquished all control of this matter. In any case, there was no way the Divine Weapon Pavilion would mistreat him or try to cheat him of his profits. What he needs to do is to focus his all on cultivation now. Only with power would one have status, resources, and authority.

In order to cultivate the Fiend Transformation Art, Qin Wentian was practically undergoing self-torture. These past few days, he spent all his time in frenzied cultivation, using all sorts of torturous methods to push himself further. But precisely because of this, the results he obtained were extremely astonishing. His physique unceasingly grew stronger, and his life force was many times more powerful when compared to the past. Each and every breath he took was filled with vitality.

In the blink of an eye, five days passed. Currently, in the open plaza region of the Royal Capital, tens of thousands of youth gathered. All these young talents were here to choose a martial academy to enrol into.

These young elites came from everywhere in Chu, their presences adding to the 'color' of the capital, causing the atmosphere to be even more lively.

Around this time every year, the Royal Capital would be bustling with noise and excitement. Regardless of the current times being a chaotic warring period, it was unable to affect the hot bloodedness of youths determined to pursue their martial paths. All of them wanted a better future for themselves.

However, those who were more observant would realized that the number of youths here today was actually lesser when compared to the past.

Because today was also the day when the Emperor Star Academy would 'pay a visit' to the Royal Academy.

Five days ago, the visit paid by the Royal Academy to the Emperor Star Academy rocked the entire Royal Capital. The fact that the Emperor Star Academy lost four of the battles became hot topics of discussion among everyone in the capital. And when Qin Wentian returned their 'politeness' with more 'politeness', suggesting that the Emperor Star Academy would visit the Royal Academy five days later, this caused many people to pay even closer attention to this matter. What type of response would the first place in the Jun Lin Banquet, Qin Wentian, have in regards to this?

And what preparations would the new Royal Academy make in order to face the proclamations of challenges.

It definitely wasn't going to be so easy if the Emperor Star Academy wanted to win. So what if Qin Wentian won his fight, what about the four other battles?

And currently, within the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian, Old Gu, Mustang, Elder Thousand-Hands and a few others were all present in a discussion.

“This is such a headache. Which five Arterial Circulation Realm students should we send?”

Old Gu was massaging his temples in a bid to alleviate his headache. Qin Wentian, Luo Huan and Mountain were three of the most outstanding Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators currently in the academy. These three would definitely be part of the five challengers.

The Jun Lin Banquet was already the stage for the pinnacle of those at Arterial Circulation. Qin Wentian and Luo Huan both obtained excellent results while Mountain's performance wasn't too bad. Currently, he had broken through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation.

However, Old Gu still had a headache. The Emperor Star Academy had such an outstanding record in the Jun Lin Banquet because of Orchon and Luo Qianqiu. Currently, Luo Qianqiu has already left, and the Ou Clan obviously supported Chu Tianjiao. Orchon also chose to disappear quietly, so how could he aid the Emperor Star Academy in disrupting Chu Tianjiao's plans?

And as for those who were in the top nine rankings, only Qin Wentian and Luo Huan belonged to the Emperor Star Academy.

After the merger between the Godly General Martial Palace and Royal Academy, they had Chu Chen and Hou Tie. They also had others such as Shi Jun of the 10 prodigies as well as Leng Ya. Although the latter two didn't get into the top nine, Leng Ya's martial prowess couldn't be underestimated.

"I'm afraid that Chu Tianjiao will find an excuse that allows Sikong Mingyue to battle. If that's the case, their team formation would be really powerful." Old Gu was worried.

Sikong Mingyue and Chu Chen obtained the 3rd and 4th rank, respectively. Hou Tie was 6th. And if Chu Tianjiao used his underhanded methods, sneaking in an unknown Arterial Circulation Realm from the Nine Mystical Palace, things were really going to be hard to handle indeed.

"Our team formation is not weak either." Luo Chen approached from a distance as he nodded to Qin Wentian. "Back then in the academy, I was played by you and 7th Night. But after witnessing your strength, I admit my inferiority. I would have lost nonetheless."

"If there's a chance, let's exchange some pointers." Qin Wentian smiled. He knew that beautiful and polite words were useless to a cultivation-fanatic like Luo Chen. Instead, Luo Chen preferred to hear words of sparring and exchanging of pointers. He lived to accept challenges.

“Okay, I will definitely do so.” Luo Chen nodded and smiled. “Are all the five challengers ready?”

“Currently, we only have four. I’m still thinking who should be the last challenger.” Old Gu grimaced.

“Hi, what about me?” A weakly sounding voice drifted over. The gazes of the spectators froze when they saw a fatty silhouette walking over, a shameless light flickering in his eyes.

Qin Wentian blinked as he stared at this person. Fan Le, it was actually Fan Le. He actually took the initiative to participate in this challenge.

“He should be able to make the cut.” Mustang’s eyes glowed with a bright light. These few days, Fan Le had always been under his guidance. As for where Fan Le’s true capabilities lied, Mustang couldn’t be clearer.

“He stepped into the 8th level of Arterial Circulation a few days ago. Although his cultivation base is somewhat lacking, with the power of his bloodline and extraordinary talent could mitigate it. Not only that, he had the power of psyche force, using his will to power his telekinesis, and is exceptionally suitable for team battles.” Mustang touched his chin and laughed, causing Qin Wentian to be somewhat startled. Fatty actually already broke through to the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. Such an improvement speed was extremely terrifying indeed.

Seeing the thunderstruck expression on Qin Wentian's face, Fan Le frowned, "Hey Boss, this fatty is also a genius."

"This fellow is really a genius, and his speed of cultivation is extremely fast. I don't know where he got his hands on so many Yuan Meteor Stones. He actually ignored the dangers and madly absorbed the Astral Energy within, forcing himself to cultivate until he broke through to the 8th level." Mustang laughed. Qin Wentian also nodded in response. Fan Le's talent was indeed extraordinary, the only bad point about him was that he was just too lazy.

After Fatty had been 'abducted' by Mustang, other than cultivating, the rest of his time was spent following a strict schedule Mustang arranged for him. Even the numbers of hours Fan Le was allowed to sleep had been clearly indicated.

"Since we already have five, let's move out."

Old Gu let out a shrill whistle as he glanced in the air. Shortly after, a gigantic griffon swooped down from the skies, appearing in front of the crowd.

Old Gu as well as the five challengers mounted the griffon, and together they soared into the skies.

And because of the lack of Luo Qianqiu and Orchon, this team formation couldn't be considered the pinnacle of what the Emperor Star Academy had to offer. But despite of this, their

combat prowess couldn't be belittled.

Qin Wentian was the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, and Luo Huan was the 9th ranker. Luo Chen was slightly unlucky but his combat prowess couldn't be doubted. Mountain broke through to the 9th level while Fatty's bloodline and talent were spectacular as well. Now, they could only see what the Royal Academy had to offer.

The speed of the 8th-grade griffon was terrifyingly swift. After just a few moments, they had already arrived in the airspace of the Royal Academy.

Countless people in the Royal Academy raised their heads as their hearts trembled. The challenges from the Emperor Star Academy, has arrived!

The Royal Academy, similar to the Emperor Star Academy, had a central arena that was used for important battles. The griffon landed in the center of the arena, Chu Tianjiao and the rest were already there waiting.

“Chu Tianjiao respectfully welcomes the arrival of Senior.”

Chu Tianjiao gave a bow in the direction of Old Gu. Beside him was Xiao Lǚ and behind him were five other silhouettes.

The five silhouettes are: Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen, Hou Tie, and Leng Ya. And as for the last person, the six from the Emperor

Star Academy involuntarily let out a gasp of surprise as they saw who their last opponent was. Their last opponent was actually an exceptionally pretty girl who was clad in white, appearing elegant while projecting a sense of nobility.

“The little princess of Chu.” An extremely sharp glint of light abruptly flashed past Old Gu’s eyes. Chu Tianjiao really held nothing back, even managing to invite the little princess to help them out at the cost of tremendous effort.

Although the little princess rarely appeared in the eyes of the crowd, Old Gu was very clear of her abilities. If she had attended the Jun Lin Banquet back then, she would definitely be one of the top nine rankers!

AGM 164 – 10 Men Group Battle

All the princes and princess of Chu were extraordinary. Other than the Eldest Prince being unable to cultivate, all of the rest had outstanding talents.

And as for the little princess of Chu, her talent in cultivation clearly far surpassed the norm, but not many people knew of this. With the status of a princess, she rarely showed her face outside the palace, and thus many did not know of her.

“Their team formation is really powerful.” Worry could be seen reflected on Old Gu’s face.

Sikong Mingyue, Chu Chen, Hou Tie, Leng Ya, and the little princess.

The combination of the five of them was clearly stronger when compared to the five from the Emperor Star Academy.

And almost immediately, expressions of interests appeared on the countenance of those from the Royal Academy. The Emperor Star Academy lost both Luo Qianqiu and Orchon, while the Royal Academy merged with the Godly General Martial Palace, with both the little princess and Sikong Mingyue in their team. They really couldn’t imagine how the Emperor Star Academy would be able to get back the face they lost.

“Ten man group battle, we will decide the victor and loser in one match.” Old Gu replied, causing the expressions of the crowd to

slack. So the strategy of the Emperor Star Academy was to make use of Qin Wentian's overwhelming strength to mitigate the other factors.

Even if it was a ten man group battle, the crowd still felt that it was dangerous for the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Wentian, Luo Huan and Luo Chen wasn't weak, but Mountain hadn't really performed well at the Jun Lin Banquet. As for Fatty, he didn't even participated back then.

Currently, Qin Wentian and his party walked up the stage, casting their gazes at their opponents.

Sikong Mingyue and the four others from Royal Academy also slowly ascended the stage, standing in a formation. It was as though they were long prepared.

Chu Tianjiao's countenance was incomparably calm. He had already expected that the Emperor Star Academy would choose this method of battle. But if they really did so, comparing the strength of their team formations, the Emperor Star Academy would lose without a doubt.

The ending result this time around would be an even louder slap on the face of the Emperor Star Academy.

"Please." Qin Wentian and the rest serenely stated. However, flames of battle intent could already be seen surging in their eyes.

RUMBLE! Sikong Mingyue stood right in front of their formation. His ancient slaughter word imprints manifested and gushed out at a crazy speed.

Hou Tie and Leng Ya stood to the left and right of Sikong Mingyue while the little princess and Chu Chen stood behind the three of them, seemingly well prepared.

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian stood at the very front. Luo Chen stood on his left, facing against Hou Tie while Mountain stood on his right, dealing with Leng Ya. Luo Huan and Fan Le, both stood at the back.

Both parties were using the same type of team formation, with three fighting in the front and two supporting from the back.

Sikong Mingyue and Qin Wentian were once again facing each other. Two overwhelming auras frenziedly clashed against each other, opposing each other with equal harshness.

Atop the stage, a hurricane was actually born from the collision of impacts. The wind force being generated fluttered Qin Wentian's robe as an expression of steel-like determination could be seen on the face of the youth.

This battle was for honor and glory. Defeat was not permitted.

Today was the day of registration and enrolment for all the

martial academies in the Royal Capital. Countless eyes were watching this battle. They could not afford to lose.

Two other terrifying aura blasted out. The owner of these auras were none other than Chu Chen and the little Princess. The power of both of their Bloodline Limits was being released.

This was the Bloodline Limit belonging to the Royal Clan of Chu. At the same time, both their Purple Amethyst Astral Souls were also released, both scepters shining with a resplendent glow. At this current moment, the two rearmost fighters were actually the most dazzling.

The purple radiance emanating forth from both the scepters, developed Sikong Mingyue, Hou Tie and Leng Ya. An instant later, their auras explosively surged.

“The Purple Amethyst Astral Soul bestows amplifications. It is extremely terrifying when used to support.” Excitement flickered in the eyes of the crowd as both Chu Chen and the little princess used their Bloodline Limits in conjunction with their Purple Amethyst Astral Souls to amplify the strengths of their three other party members. In a single breath, the two others and Sikong Mingyue’s strength, jumped up to the next level—half-step Yuanfu.

“I’m afraid the Emperor Star Academy has to return with their tails in between their legs.” Someone from the Royal Academy sarcastically remarked. Today, this was their home ground.

The Royal Academy had been suppressed for many years by the Emperor Star Academy. Currently, after merging with the Godly General Martial Palace, they could finally expel this breath of resentment that was lingering in their throats. If they won again in this battle, the reputation of the Royal Academy would instantly skyrocket to above that of the Emperor Star Academy.

Old Gu had a heavy countenance on his face. The strength of their enemies had just risen by terrifying proportions.

In the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, the power of a Bloodline Limit similarly erupted forth. Fan Le's bloodline of the Empyrean Flames started to blaze.

“Bloodline Limit.”

Qin Wentian's traits underwent a transformation. His long hair turned black, akin to wind blades fluttering in the air. His whole person emitted the air of a godly monarch, and his presence made people wanted to submit to him. He was the king.

“There were actually also two people who could use the power of bloodlines in the Emperor Star Academy.”

The crowd was almost salivating in anticipation. A battle on such a grand scale was rare, not to mention that the participants of the battle were all extremely talented geniuses at the peak of the Arterial Circulation Realm.

“Senior Sister and Fatty, control Sikong Mingyue; Luo Chen, Mountain, both of you deal with Hou Tie. Fatty, also pay attention to the sneak attacks of Chu Chen and the little princess.” Qin Wentian intoned in a low voice, and the four of them nodded in agreement. It was as though Qin Wentian was the pillar and leader of their team formation.

Sikong Mingyue took the lead and stepped forward in response. Abruptly, the four others mirrored his actions. Although they were stronger when compared to the team from the Emperor Star Academy, they didn’t dare to be careless. After all, their opponent was none other than Qin Wentian, champion of the Jun Lin Banquet.

“Control me? I really want to see how you do that.” Sikong Mingyue coldly laughed. His attacks had always been extremely hegemonic. And currently, after the amplifications to his abilities, he wasn’t even the slightest bit afraid if he had to clash directly head-on with Qin Wentian. How could Luo Huan and Fan Le even hope control him?

“COME!” Sikong Mingyue roared in anger as his Astral Soul was released. Not only him, all the nine other cultivators on the stage, with the exception of Qin Wentian, had released their Astral Soul. Momentarily, the blinding Astral Light originated from the release of the various dazzling Astral Souls inundated the stage with a flood of starlight.

The view was incredibly magnificent. All these people, none of them had an Astral Soul from the first Heavenly Layer. At the very least, the 1st Astral Souls of these nine cultivators were condensed

from the 2nd Heavenly Layer.

Sikong Mingyue strode towards Qin Wentian, his battle intent soaring to the skies. In his eyes, his only opponent today was Qin Wentian.

“Do it.”

Qin Wentian shouted coldly. An instant later, he swapped positions with Mountain while numerous long vines flicked out in the direction of Sikong Mingyue simultaneously, appearing akin to tens of thousands of tentacles.

Sikong Mingyue laughed coldly. Amusement was apparent in his eyes as he directly grabbed at the long vines with his hands. However, his smile froze in the next instant. Sounds of powershots rolled forth as Fan Le, who was standing unmoving at the boundary of the stage, shot out a string of arrows that glowed with golden light, piercing right into his eyes.

In response, Sikong Mingyue blasted out with the ancient slaughter words imprints powered by his incredible strength, wanting to eradicate everything in his path. However, the arrows abruptly shifted in mid-flight and changed their direction, flying to his side. In a blink of an eye, the crowd only saw golden streams of light dancing about on the stage, beautiful but deadly. Although the power behind the arrows wasn't that strong, it was still fatal if they pierced through the eyes, head, or throat of their intended victims.

And now, it was as though the arrows had eyes of their own. The moment they were careless, the arrows would deal critical injury or even death.

“What a beautiful picture.” Someone exclaimed in awe. The countenance of Sikong Mingyue was ugly to behold as he swiftly summoned even more slaughter imprints, but to no avail—the speed of the arrows were even faster when compared to his attack speed.

At the exact moment when Sikong Mingyue was encircled by the arrows, Luo Chen and Mountain was already clashing with Hou Tie.

Hou Tie’s attack power was terrifying indeed. But despite of this, Luo Chen’s saber attacks were even scarier, seeking to deal death with every strike. After Mountain’s breakthrough, his defense had become exceedingly tough. There was no way for Hou Tie to gain any advantage when faced against the two of them.

These happenings caused the faces of Chu Chen and the little princess to stiffen. It seemed like their plan to merely use the amplification effects of their Astral Souls to win the battle wasn’t going to succeed, not when their opponents also had two masters of control within their party.

Also at the same moment, Qin Wentian also dashed towards Leng Ya. His strategy was simple: divide and conquer.

How swift was Qin Wentian's Garuda Movement Technique? When he appeared in front of Leng Ya, Leng Ya couldn't help but shiver when he saw how sharp the expression was on Qin Wentian's slightly devilish handsome looking face.

Qin Wentian initiated by sending out a palm attack. This palm attack was none other than his Falling Mountain Palms. Currently, Qin Wentian was getting increasingly proficient with this innate technique. As he blasted out, the pressure of a mountain peak smashed downwards, its might further enhanced by Qin Wentian's strong physique. Just with a single attack, any of Leng Ya's attempts at counterattacking were all smashed into nothingness. At the very moment of contact, he already understood that when it came to pure brute force, Qin Wentian was far above him.

The aura that erupted forth from Qin Wentian had too many force augmentations. Even if the proficiency of using innate techniques wasn't taken into account, just with the augmentation granted to him by his higher layered Astral Soul as well as the Mountain-type Divine Yuan Energy, his Demonic Body, and his Bloodline Limit, he completely overwhelmed the so called 'expert' acknowledged by many others—Leng Ya.

A thunderous sound rocked the stage. Leng Ya gave a dull shout as his body was capulated through the air before slamming onto the ground below the stage. Spitting out mouthfuls of fresh blood, his arm felt as though it was already crumbled to pieces, and his internal organs shook violently. He had no more strength to attack.

Qin Wentian sent him flying with only a single strike. From this,

one could see how great the disparity of strength was between them, how strong the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet truly was.

Upon seeing how Sikong Mingyue, despite his power, was being controlled, Chu Chen and the little Princess knew that they couldn't afford to wait any longer. Locking gazes for a single moment, Chu Chen's silhouette flickered as he dashed towards the direction of Luo Huan and Fan Le.

This disgusting fatty only had a cultivation base at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation; he was only strong in restricting and controlling techniques, like how his arrows were capable of changing direction in mid-flight. As long as they eradicate this fatty, Sikong Mingyue would be able to focus his all and deal with Qin Wentian. If not, they could only wait and be wiped out by Qin Wentian one by one.

"I'll block him, Wentian, finish the rest quickly." Luo Huan's silhouette flickered, and she appeared in front of Chu Chen.

Fan Le's restrictive power was too strong; he could actually hold Sikong Mingyue back for a period of time.

Sikong Mingyue kept trying to get close to Fan Le, but Fan Le dodged relentlessly. The arrows in the air interweaved in a beautiful dance as they zoomed repeatedly towards Sikong Mingyue. It was as though this rain of arrows would never stop.

Qin Wentian appeared in front of the little princess. Demonic light glinted in his eyes when he locked gazes with the little

princess. That demonic presence of his caused the heart of the little princess to shudder involuntarily. This was the first time she met such a character. In front of Qin Wentian, she couldn't help but feel that she was lesser than even a speck of dust. Even Qin Wentian didn't know that at this moment, his aura was so stifling that he was unconsciously emitting a forcefield of absolute obedience.

AGM 165 – Complete Victory

Qin Wentian naturally knew that he had to finish his opponents quickly. Executing the Garuda Movement Technique to its utmost limits, he transformed into a stream of light as he blasted forth with the Forgotten Imprint, his palm imprints overshadowing everything. The little princess lifted her arms in defence, as she too, struck out with her own palm-type innate techniques. The power contained within her palms could be considered devastating, but despite of this, it was still insufficient to match up against Qin Wentian's domineering attacks.

BOOM! A surge of remnant Qi fluttered the little princess's hair as pride and arrogance shone in her eyes. She was even stronger when compared to Leng Ya, but despite of this, she was forced to retreat several steps.

However, her opponent was Qin Wentian!

As the sound of spitting echoed, Qin Wentian's spat out a sharp beam of sword light at an extremely close distance. This caused the beautiful countenance of the little princess to change for the worst. She ducked her head downwards, narrowly avoiding the sword beam. Qin Wentian sent out yet another palm strike, forcing her to retreat as he moved in closer with astounding speed. When the little princess looked up, Qin Wentian's hands were already choking her neck.

This fellow was really ruthless enough.

“Get down.” Qin Wentian threw the little princess unceremoniously off the stage. They could not afford to lose this battle, hence, he naturally wouldn’t hold back just because his opponent was a female.

“This bastard.” The little princess involuntarily screamed as her hands were clenched in shame. Gritting her teeth, she glared upwards at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian didn’t have time to bother with her. As of this moment, Sikong Mingyue, was trudging forwards with immense force. He was already in front of Fan Le as the ancient slaughter word imprints exploded forth.

“Fatty, give up now!” Qin Wentian shouted. However Fan Le didn’t seemed to be worried at all. With a wide grin on his face, he jumped down from the stage immediately, as though his actions were all planned beforehand. He had already bought enough time for Qin Wentian to eliminate the little princess and Leng Ya, so his mission was already accomplished.

“F*CKER!” Sikong Mingyue roared in rage, his killing intent boiled to the max. Ignoring the fact that Fan Le had already given up, he channel his Qi forwards, causing the word imprints to fly towards Fan Le. Fan Le’s expression was exceptionally ugly to behold. He didn’t think that Sikong Mingyue would still struck out despite him already being off the stage.

“Scram.” Fan Le shot out multiple astral arrows, using the force from firing the arrows to aid him in his retreat. Despite his efforts, the remnants of the slaughter Qi’s shockwaves still landed on his

body, causing him to be slammed to the ground as his inner organs trembled violently from the impact.

Sikong Mingyue didn't continue to care about Fan Le because he felt insane amounts of killing intent erupting from behind him.

As he turned back, his heart involuntarily lurched with terror as the pressure of Qin Wentian's aura assailed him. Especially now, without the amplification effects of Chu Chen and the little princess, he would definitely not be able to stand against Qin Wentian.

It was all the fault of that damned fatty. If it was not for Fan Le holding him back, Qin Wentian wouldn't have had the opportunity to eliminate two of their numbers.

Qin Wentian took a step forwards, Sikong Mingyue's knees went weak as they involuntarily trembled. The Qin Wentian currently felt many times more...demonic? When compared to the past, this aura of absolute obedience was even stronger!

How imposing had he been originally? Now, Sikong Mingyue was suppressed to the point where he had none of his imposing and haughty manner.

Rumble! A terrifying palm strike blasted forwards, as Qin Wentian executed the Falling Mountain Palms of his to its utmost limits.

Sikong Mingyue gave a roar of rage, as his ancient slaughter word imprints struck out with a power so mighty that it was able to overturn oceans and topple mountains. However, each and every of his word imprints were effortlessly shattered by the pressure of the palm strike. Qin Wentian's palm was already right in front of Sikong Mingyue.

With praiseworthy reaction speed, Sikong Mingyue caused his slaughter word imprints to integrate together, revolving in a circle around his palms as he chose to meet Qin Wentian's palm strike head on. Qin Wentian's palm wavered continuously in the air, causing numerous superimposed palm imprints to appear and slam towards Sikong Mingyue.

Kacha! Sikong Mingyue felt as though his arms were about to crumble into pieces. His arms were bounded into a lock by Qin Wentian. He saw Qin Wentian's slightly demonic features up close.

"You must really want to court death." Qin Wentian's icy cold voice was akin to a god of death. With a ferocious squeeze, one of Sikong Mingyue's arm was broken into pieces. Simultaneously, Qin Wentian sent out another palm attack aiming for the chest of Sikong Mingyue.

However, Sikong Mingyue wasn't flung through the air, for his right arm was bound in a vice-like grip by Qin Wentian.

Vomiting out large amounts of fresh blood, Sikong Mingyue gasped for mercy, "I concede." His countenance was bloodlessly white; at this moment, he felt true terror.

As the sound of Sikong Mingyue's voice rang out, all those from the Royal Academy had disbelieving expressions on their faces. In this ten man group battle, Qin Wentian alone turned the tides, overwhelming his opponents with pure strength. What sort of character was Sikong Mingyue of the Duo Prides, how superior and arrogant was he? But at this moment, he was slaughtered like an animal, choosing to utter the words 'I concede' to save his very life.

Qin Wentian wasn't done yet. Wavering his palms, he blasted three more palm imprints onto the body of Sikong Mingyue. Sikong Mingyue's countenance turned ashen when Qin Wentian finally released him. It was unknown how many of his arterial pathways and meridians Qin Wentian had destroyed as Sikong Mingyue was blasted down the stage.

The moment Sikong Mingyue was blasted down, the results of the fight was already apparent.

Currently, Qin Wentian was even stronger compared to the time when he had obtained the championship of the Jun Lin Banquet. Sikong Mingyue wasn't even able to withstand a single attack of his, let alone Hou Tie and Chu Chen. Not only that, on the side of the Emperor Star Academy, other than Fan Le, the rest of their team was still on the stage.

Hou Tie and Chu Chen didn't choose to continue battling. Instead, they lengthened the distance between them and Luo Huan. Turning their heads back to gaze at Qin Wentian, a sense of helplessness filled their hearts. Although they had predicted the

Emperor Star Academy would use the team formation battle as their strategy, they had underestimated Fan Le's control as well as Qin Wentian's real strength. As a result, the 'flawless' strategy they had prepared was easily broken.

"Scram." Qin Wentian took another step forwards as he swept his gaze at Chu Chen. That savage-looking silhouette as well as his demonic countenance caused Chu Chen not to have even the slightest notion of resisting.

Chu Chen's features stiffened unnaturally. He walked down the stage, coldly snorting.

Qin Wentian then turned his gaze at Hou Tie, only to see Hou Tie laughing bitterly as he shook his head. If he refused to battle, wasn't it the same as admitting defeat? But if he persisted on, wasn't that merely seeking humiliation for himself?

The students of the Royal Academy stared at the four silhouettes from the Emperor Star Academy on the stage. Fan Le also climbed back up, as he swept his gaze around the crowd with hints of provocation in his eyes.

Qin Wentian's eyes were extremely sharp. He didn't say a word but looked at Old Gu instead.

Old Gu smiled as he flew the griffon over to the stage. An instant later, Qin Wentian and the rest mounted the demonic beast and soared up in the skies, their silhouettes disappearing quickly over the horizon.

Without any words of arrogance or humiliation, they directly left. The remaining students of the Royal Academy were dumbstruck. If Qin Wentian had provoked or humiliated them, they would be able to give vent to their hatred and anger. But now, with no outlet, they could only hold this bout of negativity in them, causing them to feel extremely dissatisfied.

In the air, the griffon was flying. Mountain laughed uproariously, “Seeing that expression on Chu Tianjiao’s face was priceless.”

“Your defense is really praiseworthy.” Luo Chen laughed. Mountain’s two Astral Souls were all defensive in nature. If it were not for Mountain defending, Luo Chen would have never been able to deal with Hou Tie’s violent attacks.

“Your saber attacks are monstrous as well.” Mountain smiled, “However, Junior Brother Qin is still the most powerful.”

At this moment, Qin Wentian had already retracted his aura. Currently, he had a look of peace on his face, and was the image of a sunshine youth. Who would have thought that such a guy would be capable of unleashing such a terrifying aura?

“Senior Brother Mountain, don’t praise me anymore.” Qin Wentian shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

“Why not? Do you still remember the scene when Luo Huan and I went to rescue you back in the Sky Harmony City? During that

time, you were pursued by Ye Clan's men left and right, but I could sense the resolution in your eyes. At that moment, I already knew that you would become somebody great in the future, but even so, I would never have expected that you only took such a short period of time to surpass both me and Luo Huan."

Mountain had a straightforward expression on his face as he patted Qin Wentian's shoulder. He truly admired this junior brother of his.

Reminiscence flashed in Qin Wentian's eyes. Indeed, time passed by so swiftly. In just the short span of a year, he felt that his temperament had undergone so many changes.

"Junior brother, when you have many accomplishments in the future, remember to come back to the academy to see me, okay? Don't pretend that you don't know me at that time." Mountain laughed.

"Does senior brother intend to stay within the academy?" Qin Wentian inferred the meaning behind Mountain's words. In any case, he wasn't someone that the sort of person to forget past debts of kindness even if he did become famous.

"Yes, I know myself well. At the most, my absolute limits would be the peak of Yuanfu. After I step into Yuanfu, I will stay in the academy as a guest Elder to guide the younger generations. I hope that I would have a chance to meet someone as talented as you."

Qin Wentian also didn't want to influence Mountain's decision.

Looking at the honest and straightforward senior in front of him, he laughed and replied, “If I really do have grand accomplishments out there in the future, I will definitely return and pay a visit to senior.”

“Okay. Remember your promise. I have very thick-skin, so I won’t forget what you said.” Mountain replied.

“Why are you acting like this, it’s like Junior Brother Qin is already leaving us.” Luo Huan glared at Mountain, causing Mountain to rub his head in response, He continued, “Isn’t it because that you, Junior Brother Qin, Yu Fei, and the rest are already about to step into Yuanfu? Sooner or later, you guys would leave the academy.”

Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes flickered with a strange glow. She would never have expected the clumsy looking Mountain to think about such matters.

“Don’t worry, even if this sister leave the academy, when there are chances, I will still come back to visit you.” Luo Huan laughed.

The griffon descended downwards. Below them, there were already many silhouettes gathered. Countless youths with expressions of envy in their gazes raised their heads as they gazed at the descending griffon.

This place was the enrolment grounds for the Nine Great Martial Academies. Looking at the pure gazes of the crowd riveted on him, Qin Wentian sighed. Wasn’t the state of their hearts now the same

as him back then when he just entered the Royal Capital?

“Is that one of the Elders as well as some students from the Emperor Star Academy? Indeed, their demeanor and bearing are all extraordinary.” Someone whispered in the crowd below.

“Hehe, don’t all of you know? The youth in the middle is none other than the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, Qin Wentian.”

“What, that’s Qin Wentian? The most outstanding youth from Chu last year?”

“Grandpa.” At this moment, a white crane gave a shrill cry that resounded through the air as it flew to the side of the griffon. The crowd raised their heads, and upon seeing the owner of the silhouette on the crane, their stares froze in reverence and wonder.

“How beautiful.”

“This is the number one beauty of Chu, Mo Qingcheng.”

“Lass, you’re here.” Old Gu laughed.

“Aren’t you the one who ask me to be here, saying that our academy would definitely win the showdown with the Royal Academy?” Mo Qingcheng inquired.

“We won, and we won it beautifully.” Old Gu was elated. A

brilliant glow flashed in Mo Qingcheng's beautiful eyes as she stared at the group of people standing beside Old Gu before her gaze finally landed onto Qin Wentian.

“Hey.”

“I have a name okay.” Qin Wentian shrugged.

“Dumbo, right?” Mo Qingcheng gave a laugh filled with charm.

“Okay, enough of this. I shall leave here. You guys shall be the enrolment officers responsible for our academy this year.”

After both the griffon and white crane landed, Old Gu commanded them to take off immediately. Upon landing, Luo Huan shot a stare at Qin Wentian as she immediately told Mountain and Luo Chen go to the side, causing Qin Wentian to be speechless.

When the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet stood together with the number one beauty of Chu, it immediately constituted a beautiful scene that captured the focus and attention of others, causing many to involuntarily approached the area of the Emperor Star Academy.

Not long after, the news regarding the loss the Royal Academy suffered was disseminated. This caused many youths who had wanted to enrol in the Royal Academy to abruptly pause as they reconsidered their options.

AGM 166 – Xiao Lan

As the news of Royal Academy's defeat was disseminated, the crowd quickly realised that their earlier victory over the Emperor Star Academy didn't really counted for anything.

The Emperor Star Academy was still the first among the martial academies of Chu. Their number one position was unshakable.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng stood at the registration area demarcated for the Emperor Star Academy, and upon seeing the faces of the youngsters filled with vitality and excitement, both of their faces had exceptionally radiant smiles on them.

“Do you still remember what happened last year when you came to enroll?” Mo Qingcheng turned her head sideways and smiled at Qin Wentian.

“Mmm.” Qin Wentian nodded his head. He still remembered that it was exactly at this location last year when he wanted to enroll in the Emperor Star Academy that Mo Qingcheng and Nolan's carriage had passed by. Back then, Mo Qingcheng lifted the curtains of her carriage and smiled in his direction. Thinking of this now, he wondered, was Mo Qingcheng really smiling at him back then?

Perhaps in the entire Chu Country, only Qin Wentian would have such preferential treatment.

“Am I very old now?” Qin Wentian grinned.

Mo Qingcheng's beautiful eyes glanced at Qin Wentian as though she was seriously contemplating the question. Qin Wentian's eyes now were still as clear as before, but his disposition, when compared to the past, had already undergone a complete transformation. He no longer had the feel of an underripe fruit. The harrowing experiences of the past year had done much in tempering him, causing him to mature faster. Not only that, in the past, Qin Wentian's eyes would always clearly express whatever he was feeling, but now, it was hard to tell what his feelings were just from looking at his eyes.

Qin Wentian fidgeted slightly after being stared so hard by such a peerless beauty. Traces of shyness could be seen in the sun-like smile on his face

Upon seeing this, Mo Qingcheng involuntarily called out 'Dumbo' in her heart. She was so close with Qin Wentian, not because he was the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, but rather because in him, she could see a kind of simplicity and honesty that couldn't be found in other talented youths within the Royal Capital.

"Cough cough. My lovely future junior brothers and sisters, come and enroll over here." Qin Wentian panicked slightly after being stared at so hard by Mo Qingcheng. Why was he always being teased by her?

Mo Qingcheng felt that it was extremely laughable when she saw how Qin Wentian was behaving. However, in front of others, she had remarkable self-restraint and didn't allowed her laughter to

show. After all, there were too many people focused on her at this moment.

She didn't like this kind of crowded environment, but since her grandpa wanted her to come, she could only acquiesce to his demands. But seeing Qin Wentian, this dumbo, she was still quite happy about it. After all, she was a girl in the prime of her youth, and normally her life was pretty dull and boring. Her only close friend was Nolan.

“Senior brother Qin.” At this moment, a youth ran forwards in Qin Wentian's direction. Mountain tried to block the youth, but the youth's movements were extremely nimble, and he successfully dodged Mountain.

“Damned brat.” Mountain scolded in a low voice, but he had an expression of laughter on his face, apparently not blaming the youth.

“Senior brother? You haven't even passed the examination. Are you sure you will be able to enroll in the Emperor Star Academy?” Qin Wentian had a warm and gentle smile on his face as he stared at the youth, who was about 15 years old. This youth was even younger than him back then when he had enrolled into the academy.

The youth had a head full of frizzled hair and was dressed in common attire. His eyes were big but pure and filled with spirit. Reverence could be seen in them as he stared at Qin Wentian.

“Naturally. I want to be the same as senior and become the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet a year from now. How can I fail the enrollment examination to enter the Emperor Star Academy?” The youth grinned.

“Keep boasting.” Mountain walked over and gave a rap on the youth’s head, causing the youth to stare earnestly at Mountain after he recovered. “It’s true, Senior Mountain. Since Senior Brother Qin could do it, why can’t I?”

“Alright, I believe you.” Qin Wentian was feeling exceptionally happy. To think that finally, there would be someone addressing him as Senior Brother.

“Junior Brother Qin, this fellow is named Zi Jun, and he’s the same as you, from Sky Harmony City. His first Astral Soul was condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, and he’s already on our shortlist. But to think that this little rascal would be so unbridled.” Although Mountain’s words had a scolding tone to them, the twinkle in his eyes portrayed his real emotions. After all, such a genius like Zi Jun was indeed extremely rare.

No wonder this fellow worshiped him so much. It was because he was also from Sky Harmony City.

“Little fellow, work hard.” Qin Wentian ruffled the hair on Zi Jun’s head. Mo Qingcheng, who was at the side, broke out into laughter as she saw what Qin Wentian was doing. This fellow could also still be considered young, but he purposely acted like an adult in front of Zi Jun. The sight of this filled her with laughter.

“Er...” Qin Wentian cast a side glance at Mo Qingcheng. Couldn’t she give him some face in front of his junior brother?

“Ah, this beautiful sister must be the girlfriend of Senior Brother Qin, right? How beautiful.” Zi Jun had a look of admiration on his face as he stared at Mo Qingcheng. He had never seen such a ravishing lady before.

Qin Wentian’s eyes flickered, after which, he also stared at Mo Qingcheng in silence without blinking. This time around, it was Mo Qingcheng’s turn to feel awkward. An expression of shyness could be seen on her face, more beautiful than one could imagine.

Upon seeing the expression on Mo Qingcheng’s face, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but think that she would also have this day coming, and he laughed involuntarily. As the corners of his lips curled up, he looked at Zi Jun and stated, “Hmm, yes, she should be mine shortly.”

Mo Qingcheng, who was standing at Qin Wentian’s side, couldn’t help but to blush upon hearing what Qin Wentian had said. She sneakily got closer to Qin Wentian and stomped her foot on his feet, causing Qin Wentian to silently curse at how ruthless she was.

Zi Jun’s spirited eyes flickered as he punched his fist into the air, “Senior Brother, work hard!”

“Yup, you too.”

“Come with me.” Mountain chortled as he led Zi Jun away. The little fellow didn’t forget to wink several times to Qin Wentian, which caused Qin Wentian’s countenance to be filled with laughter. He really hoped that Zi Jun would be able to retain this guileless heart of his.

“Shhii...” At this moment, Qin Wentian suck in a mouthful of cool air and lowered his head. He realised that Mo Qingcheng had stomped on his foot once again. Qin Wentian could only smile bitterly as he directed his gaze at her. Mo Qingcheng refused to lock gaze with him and was staring straight ahead, but her countenance was adorned with a cheeky smile.

Taking advantages of beautiful girls was really tough indeed.

Currently , in the direction of the enrolment area allocated to the Royal Academy, there were several silhouettes, including Chu Tianjiao, Ye Wuque as well as, Xiao Lan, Wu Chong, and those who had defeated the Emperor Star Academy’s Yuanfu Realm students. They all arrived personally.

Xiao Lan’s stare shot towards the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, as his eyes landed on Qin Wentian. He silently remarked in his heart, “This person can truly be considered a rare talent. Although he had some misunderstanding with Luo Qianqiu, there was no harm if I try to pull him into my camp. After all, this would be something that benefit myself. Since that’s the case, there’s no harm in giving him a chance.”

“Get someone to go over and tell him to get over here. I wish to have a chat with him.” Xiao Lan said in a low voice.

“Brother Xiao, are you referring to Qin Wentian?” Chu Tianjiao’s countenance stiffened slightly.

“Yes.” Xiao Lan nodded his head. “It would naturally be for the best if he could be obedient. This way, it would save us from dealing with plenty of troublesome matters.”

“I can understand Brother Xiao’s love for talent, but I only fear that Qin Wentian would be unable to appreciate it.” Although Chu Tianjiao felt unhappy in his heart, he quickly suppressed his feelings as a gentle smile appeared on his countenance. He was very clear regarding the status of the person in front of him possessed within the Nine Mystical Palace—his status was even higher when compared to Luo Qianqiu. Chu Tianjiao didn’t expect that when he had contacted the Nine Mystical Palace earlier, their response was actually to send Xiao Lan over.

“Wuque, make a trip over.” Chu Tianjiao stated.

The pupils of Ye Wuque contracted slightly, but eventually he nodded his head and strode towards the enrollment area allocated to the Emperor Star Academy.

Bewilderment painted Qin Wentian’s face upon seeing Ye Wuque approach him.

Ye Wuque first casted a glance at Mo Qingcheng, hints of adoration apparent in his eyes. He had always been interested in Mo Qingcheng. To him, he always believed that only a woman of

such beauty like Mo Qingcheng could match up to him. Sadly, she was always cold towards him.

“Qin Wentian.” Ye Wuque’s gaze slowly shifted over.

“What’s the matter?” Qin Wentian stared right back. A cold glint of light could be seen flickering in his eyes.

“There’s someone who wishes to meet you. Come along with me.” Ye Wuque calmly stated as his finger pointed to the direction of the enrollment area allocated to the Royal Academy.

Qin Wentian’s eyes shifted towards the Royal Academy’s area, and he saw many pairs of eyes staring right back at him. There were Chu Tianjiao’s, Wu Chong’s as well as the eyes of that mysterious Xiao Lan.

He discovered that Xiao Lan’s gaze was the most indifferent and that Xiao Lan was standing right in the middle of Chu Tianjiao and the rest.

Qin Wentian suddenly recalled that back then when the Royal Academy issued their challenges, the first four were all extremely polite. Only Xiao Lan was exceptionally arrogant.

Overbearing and hegemonic on the stage, but the current Xiao Lan seemed as tranquil as water. Qin Wentian could faintly sensed that the person who wanted him to go over was none other than the mysterious Xiao Lan.

“Who is he?” Qin Wentian turned his head back, as traces of displeasure could be seen in his eyes.

These people were really haughty. They wanted to speak to him but actually still got Ye Wuque to take the initiative to get him to go over. Such an action apparently showcased their thoughts: they considered everyone to be beneath their attention.

He didn’t know that in the eyes of Xiao Lan, this was giving him an opportunity.

Because of his love for talent, he gave Qin Wentian a favor. After all, Qin Wentian already had a grudge with Luo Tianya and Luo Qianqiu. Although the father and son duo couldn’t represent the Nine Mystical Palace, they were part of the Nine Mystical Palace after all. Qin Wentian offended the Nine Mystical Palace and basically didn’t have any more chance to be recruited in. Xiao Lan was giving Qin Wentian an opportunity, and he hoped that Qin Wentian would be intelligent enough to grab it!

“You have no need to know. What you need to do now is to go over there,” Ye Wuque indifferently said. Qin Wentian had a faint speculation—to be able to cause Chu Tianjiao to show such degree of respect, as well as to be able to defeat Xanxus, the leader of the Heavenly Demon Association, this person most likely originated from the same place as Luo Qianqiu, the Nine Mystical Palace.

Mo Qingcheng frowned. This kind attitude really caused people to be pissed off.

“If he has something he wishes to say, he can come find me himself.” Qin Wentian’s reply caused Ye Wuque to be stunned. An extremely sharp glint of light flashed in his eyes as Ye Wuque let out a cold laugh. Qin Wentian truly wished to court death.

Ye Wuque returned to the area of the Royal Academy when Xiao Lan asked, “Why is he not here?”

“He said that if you have something to say to him, you can go find him yourself.” Ye Wuque repeated Qin Wentian’s words. Upon hearing that, a terrifying light flickered in Xiao Lan’s eyes. In an instant, his previously tranquil expression disappeared, leaving behind smouldering anger.

Xiao Lan slightly raised his head as he casted his gaze once again over to the direction of the Emperor Star Academy, locking his gaze with Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian could clearly feel the cold and disdainful arrogance in Xiao Lan’s eyes.

“I would never have thought that in a place such as Chu, I would still encounter such a matter,” Xiao Lan thought in his heart. If it weren’t for the fact that he received an unexpected piece of news—that the Azure Emperor left behind a terrifying secret within the Emperor Star Academy—he wouldn’t have travelled thousand of miles over from the Nine Mystical Palace to such a small place like Chu.

“Handle the matter of the Emperor Star Academy quickly, I don’t have much time.” Xiao Lan stated to Chu Tianjiao. After which, he

turned and departed. Even his back emanated pride and arrogance. Despite of this, however, he also kept a low profile. There was almost no one outside of this group who knew of the fact that he and a few other elites were from the Nine Mystical Palace. Perhaps this kind of inconspicuousness was already a very good indicator of his pride. He was Xiao Lan of the Nine Mystical Palace. There was no need to exhibit his status out here in such a small speck of country that was Chu.

AGM 167 – Howl Of Tragedy

For this year, the location of the enrollment examination to recruit new blood for their academies was finally decided – it was the same as last year, an expedition into the Dark Forest.

Perhaps it was because paths of blood and danger were something that cultivators had to experience before they would grow, but all the martial academies jointly gave their approval. After all, the applicants were all youthful cultivators who needed to be blooded before they could be considered to have met the bare minimum requirement of what it meant to be a cultivator.

In this dog-eat-dog world where only the strong survived, since one had already embarked on the path of cultivation, one had to press forward relentlessly, survive through countless dangerous experiences and never look back unless they were willing to be just an ordinary human.

In the small town that was situated outside the Dark Forest, many adventurers and risk takers let out a burst of laughter as they saw the group of youthful cultivators coming their way. Days of living on a sabre's edge was horrifying, since no one knew which day would be their last. Seeing the appearance of these youths would always be able to bring light into their lives, albeit only for an instant.

In the boundaries of the Dark Forest, the group of prospective students of the Emperor Star Academy were led by Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng, Luo Huan, Mountain and Luo Chen. In addition, Rain was also accompanying Qin Wentian. Currently, Qin Wentian

was already someone that the Emperor Star Academy had to protect at all costs. Because his radiance was too dazzling, there were many who wanted to kill him.

Although Gongyang Hong's deterrence made it so that not many would dare to strike out at Qin Wentian in broad daylight, he still had to defend against arrows fired at him in the dark. The assassination attempt by Janus was a very good example.

"Everyone, prepare yourself to enter the Dark Forest. Remember to be cautious in everything you do. If you are dead, you can't enroll in the Emperor Star Academy, can you?" Mountain turned his head back as he smiled to the prospective students of the Emperor Star Academy.

"Don't worry about us, Senior Mountain." The youth standing in front of the group grinned. This youth was none other than Zi Jun. Excitement could be seen flickering in his eyes as he jumped about animatedly.

"Okay, everyone let's enter." Mountain waved his hands while momentarily feeling an ambivalence of nervousness and excitement. The group from the Emperor Star Academy stepped into the Dark Forest.

A radiant smile could be seen in his eyes as Qin Wentian gazed at the madly galloping backs of the prospective students.

"Are you thinking of your own experience from last year?" Rain sat atop of a white horse as she gazed at Qin Wentian. Her gentle-

looking countenance gave off a feel of warmth when looking at her.

“Yeah, and I was also wronged by someone.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Hmph, who are you talking about?” At the side, Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes glared at Qin Wentian, appearing extremely adorable.

“The person already knows who I’m talking about. Back then, that person was truly extremely cold in her attitude.” Qin Wentian continued.

“Didn’t I already apologize?” Mo Qingcheng felt wronged and glared at Qin Wentian.

“The two of you, stop bantering so flirtatiously.” Luo Huan giggled. She was someone who wanted the world to be in chaos.

“Sister Luo Huan, what are you saying?” Mo Qingcheng’s face burned.

“What am I saying? Junior brother Qin is so talented in all aspects, even I’m in love with him. If you don’t like him, give him over to this senior sister here then.” After speaking, Luo Huan crossed her arms, propping up her twin peaks. Luo Huan’s bewitching appearance was capable of ensnaring males, causing them to be dumbfounded. Qin Wentian had a bitter smile on his

face as he regarded Luo Huan. This senior sister really wanted his life sometimes.

Upon seeing the expressions on Qin Wentian and Luo Huan's countenance, Mo Qingcheng sniffed as she turned about and made her way rapidly towards the front, causing Rain as well as the others to burst out in laughter.

Rain silently thought, the relations between humans were extremely fascinating. The words of external parties could easily cause feelings of goodwill to build over between two people. It seemed like Luo Huan was really intelligent and obviously wanted to bring the two of them together.

Seeing Qin Wentian urging his mount forward, catching up to Mo Qingcheng, Rain couldn't help but to smile. Such a couple really made people like them.

The rest of them mounted on their horses and proceeded forwards. After seeing the group of prospective students heading into the depths of the Dark Forest, Mountain involuntarily called out, "I'll go and protect Zi Jun."

After which, he galloped ahead, into the depths of the Dark Forest.

If this were a year ago, Mountain would never have done this. But after the learning about the experiences Qin Wentian faced that year, as well as the current chaotic movements in the Royal Capital, Mountain didn't want to take any chances.

“Seems like Senior Mountain truly likes that kid Zi Jun.” Qin Wentian turned as Rain, Luo Huan and the rest caught up.

“He’s already thinking of being an Elder, acting like a teacher guiding his students.” Luo Huan laughed lightly.

“Yes, you are right, Senior Mountain said earlier he was already prepared to remain in the Emperor Star Academy. Somehow, from his silhouette, I could see traces of Teacher Mustang.” Qin Wentian murmured in a low voice. Every time Mountain was by his side, he would sense a protective aura akin to a big brother. Although Mountain looked slow, he was calm and unflustered.

“I think it has something to do with his past experiences. Mountain was an orphan entrusted to the care of Teacher Mustang when he was 10. After discovering that he has an aptitude for cultivation, Teacher began to instruct him in the path of cultivation, viewing him as his own son and guiding him with all his efforts. It’s only natural that you could see traces of Teacher Mustang in Mountain. Other than talent, his decision to stay on behind as a guest Elder of the Academy after he broke through to Yuanfu was undoubtedly also because Mustang had a great influence on him.”

Luo Huan seriously continued, and warmth could be seen in her eyes. She herself, as well as Mountain and many others, had grown up together under Mustang’s care.

“So that’s the case.” Qin Wentian mumbled. He watched warmly

as Mountain's silhouette gradually disappeared in the depths of the Dark Forest.

“Luo Chen, Fatty, come with me. Sister Rain, junior brother Qin and Miss Mo will form a separate group. Let's split up.” Luo Huan spoke. Her group went on the left path as Qin Wentian's group went towards the right. Although this was an examination, there was still a need for countermeasures in the case of unforeseen danger.

“You two can continue chatting, I'll take a look ahead.” Rain spoke to Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng as she went ahead, leaving Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng alone.

This caused Qin Wentian to be speechless. How could he not understand Rain's intentions?

In the quiet Dark Forest, Qin Wentian rode side by side with Mo Qingcheng, but for some reason, the atmosphere felt a little awkward.

Mo Qingcheng turned her gaze to Qin Wentian as she asked, “Dumbo, do you mind telling me about matters of your past?”

“What do you wish to hear about?” Qin Wentian replied, “Before I came to the Royal Capital, i virtually spent my entire life in the Qin Residence located in Sky Harmony City, with nothing noteworthy to mention.”

“Were you not together with Autumn Snow?” Mo Qingcheng mumbled in a low voice. It was as if she knew that she shouldn’t be asking this question, after which her countenance quickly turned red. She continued, “You don’t mind me asking this, right...?”

“Why would I mind? It’s all in the past.” Qin Wentian shrugged as he smiled.

“Okay then.” Mo Qingcheng smiled sweetly, “Anyway, you will be able to find a better girl, so there’s no need to be bothered about matters of the past.”

“Find a better girl?” Qin Wentian blinked. He gazed at Mo Qingcheng.

Speaking of a better one, the number one beauty of Chu right in front of his eyes surpassed Autumn Snow in virtually all aspects.

Seeing how Qin Wentian kept gazing at her, Mo Qingcheng’s face grew red once again. She exasperatedly glanced at Qin Wentian as she remarked, “Rascal.”

After which, she urged her horse forwards. Over the horizons, there was a white crane hovering in the sky above.

“Wasn’t I ‘Dumbo’? When did I become a rascal?” Qin Wentian rubbed his head as he smiled, gazing at the beautiful silhouette in front of him.

In the blink of an eye, more than ten days had passed since they entered the Dark Forest. The prospective students of the various martial academies tried their best to survive, hunting the demonic beasts. Only now did many of them understand the difficulties of pursuing the martial path.

At this moment, Zi Jun arrived at a thicket of trees. The long spear in his hands penetrated right through the head of a demonic bear, finally killing it after immense efforts. Digging out the demonic core in its head, Zi Jun placed the core into a pouch that was hanging by his side.

His shirt was all torn and tattered, and traces of blood could be seen on his face. But despite of this, he was brimming with smiles. He had already killed plenty of low-level demonic beast and had sufficient demonic cores to exchange for some Yuan Meteor Stones to cultivate when he returned to the Royal Academy. With Yuan Meteor Stones, his cultivation speed would increase.

And just thinking of this, Zi Jun would be extremely happy. His dream was to be like Qin Wentian. He wanted the glory of becoming the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet a year from now.

With such a dream, he naturally understood how much hard work he needed to put in. Even if there was danger, he would not hesitate.

A steel-like resolution could be seen written on his face.

Behind him, underneath an ancient looking tree, Mountain was

watching over him with admiration etched on his face. In the future, if Zi Jun weren't as outstanding as junior brother Qin, his capabilities wouldn't be too far from the mark.

Zi Jun continued walking ahead. However, at this moment, a sharp glint of light flickered in his eyes.

Tossing aside the pouch filled with demonic cores, he brandished the long spear in his hands as whistling sounds echoed out in the air. Three terrifying arrows akin to golden lightning fired straight towards him.

Zi Jun continued retreating. The long spear in his hands danced about, transforming into a rain of spears as booming sounds rang out. At the moment of contact with the arrows, Zi Jun was forced backwards several steps by the impact, but he continued his defense.

However, at this moment, a long lance was shot through the air with terrifying speed, growing increasingly larger in his field of vision.

Puchi...

The long lance was flung out by someone possessing tremendous strength. Zi Jun's body was lifted up as the momentum caused his body to soar backwards, resulting in him being nailed to an ancient looking tree behind..

The previous smile had disappeared from his face. At this moment, only despair could be seen as he lowered his head, looking at the long lance that penetrated through his heart.

Why would there be someone so powerful here who wanted to ambush him?!

An instant later, his eyes lost their glow. But even in death, his eyes remained wide open giving testament to the fact that he died with a grievance. He had just taken his first step, hoping to accomplish his dreams, but even before he achieved it, everything had ended.

“NOOOOOOOOO!” A voice filled with intense fear and anger shook the Dark Forest. Mountain released his Astral Souls as he frenziedly sprinted forwards. During the moment the arrows appeared, he was already filled with a terrible sense of foreboding and had already started rushing towards Zi Jun’s direction. However, everything was too late.

Rustling sounds could be heard from a distance away. Pairs after pairs of eyes filled with terrifying coldness and killing intent appeared, staring at Mountain as though they were staring at their prey.

Mountain’s roar was exceptionally ear-splitting. Nearby cultivators all sprinted over in his direction when they heard it.

By this time, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng had already caught up with Rain. When he heard the deafening roar, he couldn’t help

but be filled with a sense of unease. That roar sounded exceedingly familiar to his ears.

Pssst! Qin Wentian dismounted from his horse as a pair of Garuda Wings appeared on his back, speeding forth with a speed as fast as lightning.

Mo Qingcheng gave a whistle, causing the hovering white crane to descend. Mo Qingcheng mounted the white crane, flying towards the direction of the roar.

Rain soared into the skies as she follow closely behind Qin Wentian.

The feeling of unease was getting stronger and stronger.

AGM 168 – Heartbroken

Near the thicket, several people had already gathered. They were all drawn here by the sound of the deafening roar. Currently, they all had wide-eyed expressions as though they had seen something extremely shocking.

Qin Wentian finally arrived at the area, his heart pounding madly.

In his heart, there was unease as well as terror. He feared that he would see something he didn't want to see.

His steps grew incomparably heavy as he walked forwards, heading into the crowd.

There was a lance embedded atop an ancient tree. Pierced through by the lance, a body hung lifelessly, pinned on the sturdy trunk of the ancient tree. Blood dyed his torn and tattered robes red. The body that hung there was long out of breath. His eyes were wide open in death, filled with unwillingness and depression. He was still so young and full of hope for the future, but he died here just like this, an ignoble death.

Boom. Qin Wentian's heart heavily pounded. His countenance was as white as paper. Wasn't the youth who died Zi Jun? What happened? He didn't die at the hands of a demonic beast for sure. The long lance that penetrated through him seemed to be a silent proclamation.

Mo Qingcheng and Rain also went pale white, their beautiful faces devoid of any traces of a smile. Instead, their countenances were exceptionally cold, like the deadly chill of winter.

Qin Wentian slowly continued forwards, his gaze unwavering as he stared at the body of his never-to-be junior brother. After which, he slowly turned his gaze and stared at the thicket of trees far up ahead. Over there, blood soaked the entire ground as a body quietly laid there, deathly still.

Mountain had been protecting Zi Jun in the shadows. When Qin Wentian saw the impaled Zi Jun, his heart had already been filled with pain, but he was still overshadowed by a heavy sense of foreboding. Indeed, what he feared finally came true.

Rustling sounds rang out as several shadows appeared. Luo Huan's racy figure was still extremely mesmerising, but her face only reflected icy coldness as well as sorrow.

She immediately lunged to Mountain's side and kneeled there on the ground. Reaching out with her trembling hands, she gently caressed Mountain's face as her tears fell down like rain from the Heavens.

Silent tears, yet nothing in the whole world seemed to be as loud as this. This was the first time Qin Wentian saw the happy-go-lucky Luo Huan in such agony, not to mention her unending flood of tears.

“AHHHHHHHHHHH...” Luo Huan raised her head as she

screamed, filled with grief and anger, resounding throughout the Dark Forest. Anyone who heard that was able to sense the amount of sorrow and depression in her voice.

Luo Cheng, Fan Le and the rest arrived by Luo Huans side as they too, knelt on the ground, with pain filling their hearts.

Qin Wentian's raised his feet, which suddenly felt as though they weighed 1,000 Jin, as he approached the body of Zi Jun, extending his hands to close his eyes shut.

After which, he pulled the long lance out and carried the body of Zi Jun before walking over to Mountain. Placing Zi Jun next to Mountain, he too knelt down as he silently stared at both of their faces.

“Junior brother, when you have many accomplishments in the future, remember to come back to the academy to see me, okay? Don't pretend that you don't know me at that time.” Mountain's words still resounded in his ears. Mountain had already been at the peak of Arterial Circulation and was sure to step into Yuanfu by the end of this year. After he broke through to Yuanfu, he would undergo his preparations to become an honorary Elder, guiding the students in the Emperor Star Academy.

Mountain had a very good impression of the talented Zi Jun and had wanted to nurture a genius that could be comparable to his junior brother Qin Wentian.

His dream wasn't too farfetched. He only wanted to live a smooth

and steady life in the academy, imparting his knowledge to the newer generations.

But now, everything had vanished into thin air.

He had passed on. The big brother figure, who had still been alive a few days ago, closed his eyes in the unending sleep of death.

Impaled in his body were a few long lances, indicating that his death was not caused by a single culprit.

Their deaths were premeditated, but the motives of the killers were unclear.

“Sister Luo Huan.” Qin Wentian called out as Luo Huan looked at him. Previously, Qin Wentian had always referred to her as Senior Sister Luo Huan, but this time around, he actually referred to her as Sister Luo Huan

Qin Wentian reached his hands out, wiping away the tears cascading from her face.

There was a trace of crazed laughter in Qin Wentian’s eyes that seemed incredibly fiend-like. This was the first time Luo Huan had ever seen such an expression in his eyes. From this moment onwards, in her entire life, she would never be able to forget this look of laughter in Qin Wentian’s eyes. That laughter seemed to be tinged with madness, as grief, anger, agony, and determination all coagulated together, giving form to it.

“I know that no matter what else we do, Senior Mountain will never wake up again. However, I will ensure that the killers pay an excruciatingly painful price.” Qin Wentian slowly enunciated each word as he stared straight ahead with his haunted eyes.

Mountain wouldn't have any enemies within the Emperor Star Academy. He entered the depths of the Dark Forest in secret to protect Zi Jun from danger, so there shouldn't be any clashes between him and any others. His killers were obviously provoking the Emperor Star Academy on purpose.

If he were to guess, the suspicions of the Royal Clan being the one behind this incident would be the highest.

If it was indeed as he had guessed, he vowed that the imperial authority of Chu would surely change. Definitely. As long as he, Qin Wentian, was alive.

Luo Huan's eyes were bloodshot as she heavily nodded her head. The culprits behind Mountain's death definitely had to pay a heavy price.

“We have to inform all the prospective students of our Emperor Star Academy to evacuate this place. There's a high possibility that this incident wasn't aimed at Mountain alone but at the entire Emperor Star Academy.” Rain was also feeling terrible, but as the person with the highest authority, she had to remain calm.

“Other than the few of us, the remaining juniors are all still in

the examination phase. If someone really wanted to target the Emperor Star Academy, their target would be us.” Luo Cheng was also exceptionally calm as he continued, “However, there’s no need for the examination to carry on. I agree that the evacuation plan is good, but we too must depart from the Dark Forest.”

Rain nodded her head in agreement; she knew that Luo Cheng spoke the truth, The enemy was hiding in the dark while they were all out in the light, making this an extremely dangerous situation. The prospective students of the Emperor Star Academy were spread out all over the Dark Forest, so it wasn’t feasible for them to find them one by one.

Rain soared up the skies as she stood in the air, howling out a command, “All prospective students of the Emperor Star Academy, immediately depart from the Dark Forest.”

Powerful sound waves resounded in all directions as Rain landed onto the ground. She could only do so much. Luo Cheng was right, the prospective students were just undergoing an examination. If there were people who wanted to target the Emperor Star Academy deliberately, they wouldn’t attack cultivators who weren’t part of the academy as of yet.

“Let us leave now.” Rain stated to Qin Wentian and the others.

However, Qin Wentian replied, “Senior Mountain just passed away for a short period of time. I believe his killers couldn’t have escaped too far. I wish to go take a look.”

“Impossible.” Rain directly rejected. Qin Wentian’s safety was of the utmost importance.

If this was really done by the Royal Clan, on a certain degree, it means that the Royal Clan had already began to take actions against the Emperor Star Academy.

Previously, both could co-exist peacefully. But once face was torn, there would no longer be any peace and quiet. On the contrary, when the time came, chaos would certainly erupt.

“I just want to see if there are any clues remaining. Senior Rain, don’t worry, I won’t be rash.” Qin Wentian appeared exceptionally calm. Upon seeing his resolution, Rain could only concur, “You can only search around the vicinity and are not allowed to wander too far. I’ll come with you.”

“I’ll go with you too. Let’s go on my white crane.” Mo Qingcheng spoke as she walked forwards.

Qin Wentian cast a glance at Mo Qingcheng. He nodded his agreement, “Fine, let’s go now.”

“I will bring the bodies of Mountain and Zi Jun back.” Luo Huan remarked. Qin Wentian and the two ladies mounted the white crane as they tracked the trail of footprints through the air.

The speed of the white crane was incredibly fast as they flew

straight ahead.

“Over there.” Qin Wentian remarked when he saw the corpses of demonic beasts lying below them.

“There’s a dense thicket of trees ahead, be careful.” Rain stared at the densely clustered trees. It was a prime location for an ambush.

“There are people over there.” Qin Wentian’s gaze abruptly sharpened as he saw a group of silhouettes melding into the shadows of the forest, covertly retreating towards the direction of the dense cluster of trees.

“There’s someone here as well.” Mo Qingcheng spoke in a low voice as Qin Wentian’s pupils contracted. Upon seeing the faces of the new arrivals, the look in Qin Wentian’s eyes turned ice cold as a terrifying light flickered within.

“Ye Wuque, Wang Teng, Wu Chong.”

These three were none other than the challengers from back then.

The three of them rose in the air, blocking the path of the white crane as they spoke, “What a coincidence.”

“Get out of my way.” Qin Wentian coldly stated.

However, the three of them continued to stand there calmly, as rustling sounds echoed in the air. Below them, several silhouettes cloaked in black were disappearing within the densely cluttered trees ahead.

The white crane gave a shrill cry of anger as it dashed forward, as though it wanted to clash against the three opposing cultivators. Rain faced against Wang Teng on the left while Mo Qingcheng faced Wu Chong on the right. Qin Wentian was face to face with Ye Wuque.

An incredibly demonic aura erupted forth as Qin Wentian sent out countless palm imprints, his arterial pathways howling as the energy within him was channeled to his arms. Blasting out with the Falling Mountain Palms with his left and Forgotten Imprints with his right, Qin Wentian wanted to decimate everything in his path.

Ye Wuque coldly laughed as he sent out both his palms to meet the attack. A monstrously sharp aura emanated from him.

At the moment of impact, Qin Wentian only felt that the energy of his opponent was like a continuous, uninterrupted flow of water. This was the level of Yuanfu. The vast and boundless amounts of Astral Energy stored within the body of a Yuanfu cultivator wasn't something an Arterial Circulation cultivator would be able to match up against. Qin Wentian's arms trembled violently as his body was flung backwards.

The white crane flew backwards, allowing Qin Wentian's body to land on it. Rain and Mo Qingcheng retreated as well. The last of the black cloaked figures had all already successfully retreated into the dense clusters of trees.

Blood seeped out of the corners of Qin Wentian's mouth. His eyes grew ice cold and incomparably demonic in this instant.

"Let's return." Rain intoned in a low voice. Mo Qingcheng also agreed; she knew that they would be in incomparable danger should they proceed forwards. However, as she glanced at Qin Wentian, she discovered that at this moment, Qin Wentian had undergone a complete transformation. His countenance was devilishly handsome yet extremely cold as his long black hair fluttered about with the wind.

"Ye Wuque, I will make you pay." Qin Wentian spat out. The white crane turned and departed, Qin Wentian's icy voice resounded through the air.

Ye Wuque furrowed his brows. The image of Qin Wentian's cold eyes floated up in his mind. At that moment earlier, Qin Wentian felt abnormally demonic.

AGM 169 – The Coming Of A Violent Storm

The prospective students of the Emperor Star Academy departed from the Dark Forest. The news of Mountain's death was quickly spread throughout the Royal Capital and caused a huge commotion.

Although many knew of Mountain from the Emperor Star Academy, he was not that famous when placed in the perspective of the entire Royal Capital. As for why his death caused such a huge commotion, it was because currently, the relationship between the Royal Academy and the Emperor Star Academy was as thin as a piece of paper. And now that a student of the Emperor Star Academy was murdered in the Dark Forest, how would people not speculate on the reasons behind it?

All sorts of rumors flew about, and ultimately, the spearhead of blame was pointed at the tensed relationship between the two parties.

Within Chu, the position of the Emperor Star Academy was always unrivaled. And with regards to entities with high positions such as the Emperor Star Academy, the Royal Clan always adopted a tolerant attitude. But now with the merger of the Royal Academy and the Godly General Martial Palace, their objective was to weaken the prestige and reputation of the Emperor Star Academy, causing the thin line of equilibrium finally shatter. Was the Royal Academy finally tired of tolerating the existence of the Emperor Star Academy?

The citizens of Chu naturally wouldn't know why the Royal Clan

would choose this period of turmoil to strike out. Currently, the Chu Country was engulfed by the flames of war as

the rebels invaded the other cities of Chu steadily and surely, constantly pressing closer and closer towards the Royal Capital. This could be said to be one of the most trying times in the history of Chu.

There were rumors saying that the troops of Chu had pulled back long ago and were prepared to give up the control of half the country to the rebels. As the saying goes, strong when united, weak when divided. The Royal Clan had no choice but to give up and could only consolidate their power by giving up control.

At this moment, inside an exceptionally luxurious hall within the Chu Palace, there were several figures lined up on both sides. However, the person sitting on the master seat was actually not Chu Tianjiao but Xiao Lan instead.

Xiao Lan reclined comfortably on his seat, with both of his hands tapping on the armrests of the chairs according to an unpredictable rhythm.

“How goes the preparations?” Xiao Lan calmly inquired.

“There are no problems on my side, but when would the experts from the Nine Mystical Palace arrive?” Chu Tianjiao respectfully replied.

“Within two days, I guess.” Xiao Lan’s gaze shifted from Chu Tianjiao to Xiao Lǚ as he continued asking, “How about the side of

Snowcloud?”

“Very soon, they will be here within three days.” Xiao Lǚ replied.

Only now did Xiao Lan nod his head as he closed his eye. It was only after several moments that he spoke again, “Xiao Lǚ, I have to trouble you this time around. If this matter is successful, I will report this back up the upper echelons of the Nine Mystical Palace. Your branch might be able to return.”

“Thank you, Elder Brother.” Xiao Lǚ’s face was full of smiles. There was almost no one who knew that the Royal Clan of Snowcloud was actually one of the branch families of the main Xiao Clan from the Nine Mystical Palace.

“Time is almost up. During these few days, I will send people to secretly provoke the Emperor Star Academy and force them to make their move.” Chu Tianjiao laughed. As to why would he chose to act against the Emperor Star Academy amidst this time of turmoil, it was because this was a godsent opportunity. The Nine Mystical Palace that had never once bothered themselves with regards to governing the countries under their administration wanted to move against the Emperor Star Academy.

Chu Tianjiao didn’t know what exactly was the reason. Xiao Lan was a descendant of the Xiao Clan, which was one of the three great factions within the Nine Mystical Palace. Since he came here, he definitely had it reason. Chu Tianjiao had no need to ask, and moreover he also knew that it was not his place to ask.

Although Xiao Lan appeared relaxed, he actually had a load on his mind. It was not so easy wanting to take down the Emperor Star Academy.

Back then in the past, Luo Tianya had wanted to do the same but didn't succeed. Behind the Emperor Star Academy were the shadows of the Azure Emperor Palace. If the Nine Mystical Palace really did send their Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns to take action, the Azure Emperor Palace would definitely intervene.

Before this, Xiao Lan had never paid much attention to this. But now, he could faintly sense that there was a connection; it all pointed to the secret that the Azure Emperor hid in the Emperor Star Academy.

There were three sacred grounds within the Emperor Star Academy. The Heavenly Star Pavilion, Astral River Hall, and the Dreamsky Forest. In which of these three sacred grounds would the secret be hidden within?

Qin Wentian had already set foot on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. They had also once considered kidnapping him and using force to interrogate Qin Wentian but soon gave up the plan because of deterrence from Gongyang Hong. This wasn't the time to antagonise someone at the Heavenly Dipper level. If they wanted to make a move against Qin Wentian, it would be best if there were no implications. After all, they were unsure how deep the relationship between Gongyang Hong and Qin Wentian was.

Although the main branch of the Xiao Clan wouldn't fear Gongyang Hong, if a Heavenly Dipper Sovereign went crazy, their

descendants of the other branches had a very high possibility of being utterly annihilated. It wasn't worth it.

As for Mountain's death, they couldn't be bothered.

Although they wouldn't be bothered, the Emperor Star Academy took this matter very seriously indeed.

Today, the Emperor Star Academy intentionally erect a stone tablet for Mountain and Zi Jun. This stone tablet was erected underneath the Emperor Star Monuments. Although Zi Jun wasn't officially a student of the Emperor Star Academy, the introduction that was carved into the stone monuments introduced him as one of the most elite talented genius young students ever to be enrolled.

This was unprecedented in the history of the Emperor Star Academy. The Emperor Star Monuments were the symbols of the academy's glory and milestones throughout history, and never had a student's death been inscribed onto it, not even once.

However, this time around, the Emperor Star Academy made an exception and did so.

A cold wind billowed by, bringing with it a sense of desolation. There were several silhouettes standing in front of the Emperor Star Monuments, as well as many Elders. All of them had solemn expressions on their faces as they stared at the stone tablet.

The erection of the stone tablet was Ren Qianxing's idea. He wanted the Emperor Star Academy to carve this memory into their history. This wasn't a simple assassination, and it had a high possibility of being a silent declaration of war.

Perhaps a 1,000 years from now, if the Emperor Star Academy still existed, this piece of history would still be mentioned by the later generations. But if the Emperor Star Academy disappeared, then everything would not matter anymore.

So when Ren Qianxing brought up the suggestion, all the Elders had a surprising take on this.

They agreed on this decision unanimously.

Behind the Elders of the academy, many students gathered. They were all flabbergasted as to why Mountain as well as a yet-to-be-enrolled student would have their stone tablet erected underneath the Emperor Star Monuments, but after the explanations, all of them understood that this incident had a high probability of being a historical incident of the academy.

After this, violent storms of conflict would suddenly give rise to momentous incidents.

“The 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao pays a formal visit to the Emperor Star Academy.” In the horizons, a voice echoed throughout the Emperor Star Academy, causing the crowd to make a clamor.

Very quickly, the silhouettes of Chu Tianjiao and a few others came into view. The arrival of these people caught the Emperor Star Academy by surprise. The crowd automatically opened up a path, as Chu Tianjiao and his people arrived in front of the Emperor Star Monuments.

The Elders of the academy slowly turned as they stared directly at Chu Tianjiao and his people.

Upon seeing Ye Wuque, Wu Chong, and Wang Teng among the visitors, an extremely chilly aura and killing intent emanated forth from Qin Wentian's body.

Beside him, a small and dainty hand slipped into his, gently touching his palms. Feeling the warmth of that hand, Qin Wentian froze for an instant as he turned and saw Mo Qingcheng smiling at him, as though she was telling him to be patient. Only then did he retract his aura.

Chu Tianjiao continued forward, walking towards the monuments. In front of them, a figure silently stood there with his back facing them, blocking their path.

This person was none other than Mustang.

Without a choice, Chu Tianjiao and his people bowed and pay their obeisance towards the stone tablet. They could not have predicted that the Emperor Star Academy would erect a stone tablet underneath the monuments solely for the sake of Mountain and Zi Jun.

The actions of the Emperor Star Academy gave them a tremendous pressure.

This was a silent proclamation. Somehow, the death of those two became the glue that caused those at the Emperor Star Academy to be even more united. Chu Tianjiao turned his head back and swept his glance across the numerous faces standing in the crowd as he silently sighed in his heart.

“Respected Elders, Chu Tianjiao has something to say, I wonder if it’s suitable to say it?” Chu Tianjiao stared at the crowd as he inquired.

No one replied. The silence of such an atmosphere made it seem as though they wanted to crush him into pieces.

“Speak.” An instant later, Ren Qianxing coldly spoke.

“Currently, the Royal Academy of Chu has already merged with the Godly General Martial Palace, combining their influences. The Royal Clan wishes to create an even stronger martial academy and hope that the Emperor Star Academy would agree to our merger request.” Chu Tianjiao slowly continued, “In this way, the ultimate power that’s the consolidation between the three academies would be born. Regardless of teachers or resources, we would then have a nearly endless supply for the students. Not only that, I can promise to leave everything about the Emperor Star Academy untouched.”

Upon hearing Chu Tianjiao's words, many had cold smiles on their faces. He wanted to devour the Emperor Star Academy? Was that even possible?

"As long as the Emperor Star Academy agrees, all teachers and students of your academy would be able to receive immense amounts of cultivation resources on a monthly basis." Chu Tianjiao added, but just as before, only silence answered him.

"SCRAM." A cold voice resounded in the stillness of the silent atmosphere. The person who spoke was Mustang. His back was still facing them, and he made no moves to turn to look at them. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to control himself and suppress the rage that was boiling within him.

Chu Tianjiao froze, but he soon recovered with a smile on his face. He bowed again to the Elders of the Emperor Star Academy as he replied, "Chu Tianjiao of the junior generation bids farewell."

After which, Chu Tianjiao and the rest of the visitors prepared to depart.

"Hold on." Ren Qianxing remarked, causing Chu Tianjiao to halt in his steps.

"From this moment onwards, the Emperor Star Academy is forbidden for any of you to enter. For those who trespass, we will kill on sight regardless of that person's identity." Ren Qianxing's voice faded as a murderous intent resonated in the air. The coldness of the voice caused Chu Tianjiao's heart to involuntarily

tremble. But swiftly after, the corners of his lips curled upwards in a cold smile. He continued his steps, departing from the Emperor Star Academy.

The Emperor Star Academy didn't directly act against Chu Tianjiao right now. Firstly, there was insufficient justification. Secondly, if they truly dealt with these people right here and now, the ones who would face a calamity would be the students of their academy. The other innocent students might be completely annihilated in cold revenge.

This was their bottom line. Even if war actually erupted, they would still hold onto this unless the bottom line of either party was already shredded into pieces.

Francis arrived at the academy, and knowing the relationship between him and Qin Wentian, they permitted Francis to enter and leave freely. This time around, he brought over all the cultivation resources that Qin Wentian had requested, which had been painstakingly completely gathered by the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

After receiving the resources, Qin Wentian began his cultivation. His heart was filled with bitter anger, but he knew that his current strength was still far from being enough.

In the few days after that incident, the Royal Academy felt extremely peaceful, but many knew that this was merely the calm before the violent storm.

Both the Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Clan did not make any moves; it was though both sides were waiting for something.

These few days, there was people flying over the airspace of Chu, directly to within the Chu Palace while at the same time, quite a number of people left the Emperor Star Academy. All these deserters were from the Knight's Association. They had decided to shift their allegiance, and upon seeing these occurrences, other students of the Emperor Star Academy felt that indeed, a violent storm would be descending upon them momentarily.

AGM 170 – Incident

In the Emperor Star Academy, within the training grounds Qin Wentian was in, demonic Qi permeated the air. The towering amounts of demonic Qi formed swirls of demonic mist and was so abundant that it could be described as rushing up to the heavens. This entire space seemed as though it was inundated by the presence of terrifying demons.

Within the mist, Qin Wentian sat there cross-legged. At this moment, his countenance looked incomparably demonic as columns and columns of demonic light flickered incessantly. His body seemed to be relentlessly undergoing a transformation.

Abruptly, the swirls of demonic mist in the training grounds frenziedly gushed towards Qin Wentian. The columns of demonic lights around his body were as resplendent as the Astral Lights emitted from the constellations. Deafening rumbling sounds rang out, and in the space of a few breaths' worth of time, the entirety of the demonic mist dissipated once it was all absorbed into his body. Only now did the columns of demonic lights stopped flickering as they disappeared one after another.

“BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!” A thunderous pounding sound could be heard thumping according to a strange rhythm inside his body. This was the sound of his heart beating. At this moment, Qin Wentian could clearly feel the immense qualitative transformation of his own vitality.

His current vitality, when compared to the past, multiplied by manifolds.

As Qin Wentian opened his eyes, a glint of demonic light could be seen flickering within. His gaze was terrifyingly sharp, and that countenance of his was tinged with a hint of an overwhelming handsomeness that could only be described as demonically bewitching.

“Hu...” Qin Wentian exhaled and flexed his body. Crackling sounds could be heard from within as his bones shifted.

Abruptly clenching his fist, a loud booming sound echoed out. This was the feeling his body being completely filled with strength.

Currently, his physique could already be comparable to a demonic beast. If in the future he chose to condense a Beast-type Astral Soul for his third Astral Gate, he would then be able to advance the Fiend Transformation Art to the second level, obtaining an even more powerful demonic body.

As of this moment, Qin Wentian could feel that just with this, his strength level had soared tremendously. Even without using innate techniques, any casual strikes he made would pack a power that his opponent wouldn't be able to ignore. He was naturally exceptionally satisfied with the gains he made.

Standing up, Qin Wentian retracted his aura back as he walked out of the training grounds.

“Wentian.” Qin Yao, who was sitting in a nearby pavilion, ran towards Qin Wentian when she noticed that Qin Wentian has

ended his close-door seclusion. Tenderly touching his face, she wiped the sweat away as she smiled, “You have to pay attention to your body condition even though you are cultivating. You are not allowed to cultivate 24 hours a day, okay?”

Qin Yao knew that Mountain’s death had a great impact on Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian didn’t have much friends within the Emperor Star Academy. Not to mention Mountain, Luo Huan and a few others were the ones who had aided his escape from the clutches of the Ye Clan back when he had still been in Sky Harmony City.

“Don’t worry sis, the bodies of us cultivators only gets stronger and stronger the deeper our cultivation base is.” A gentle smile blossomed on Qin Wentian’s face. Qin Yao nodded in agreement as she continued, “True, but you have to know your limits.”

“I understand.” Qin Wentian knew that Qin Yao was worried about him.

“How’s the situation out there?” Qin Wentian asked.

“The wind is sighing and the cranes are calling. Everything is in a state of tension. The Royal Academy provoked us a few times but there haven’t been any major clashes yet. However, I fear that it’s only a matter of time.” One could tell that the war between the Royal Clan and the Emperor Star Academy would erupt at any moment from Qin Yao’s reply.

Currently, many of the nobility as well as other clans with

sufficient power were all keeping a low profile and spectating from the sidelines. The intensity of the storm this time would surely be at an unprecedented level.

The Emperor Star Academy was akin to an extremely powerful prey that the Royal Clan wanted to swallow. However, it was exceptionally difficult to do so. Currently, there were many flying-type demonic beasts flying in the airspace of the Royal Capital. Only those at Yuanfu possess flying rights, and many of them flew directly to the Royal Palace. However, among the Yuanfu cultivators, there were also some alumni of the Emperor Star Academy as well as students

who had been out for cultivation. Upon hearing the news, those who valued affection and comradeship and weren't too far away had all returned to support their alma mater.

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian nodded, “Sister, take good care of Father.”

After that, Qin Wentian walk towards the direction of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. In the Heavenly Star Pavilion, the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds was on the 7th level, while the Fiend Transformation Art was on the 8th level. Then, what exactly did the Azure Emperor leave behind on the 9th level of the pavilion?

This time around, Qin Wentian wanted to unravel the mystery.

Entering the Heavenly Pavilion once again, Qin Wentian bowed low with respect as he stood before the decrepit-looking guardian.

“Do you wish to enter the last entrance?” The old man abruptly asked.

“Yes.” Qin Wentian nodded. If the guardian was willing to guide him, it would naturally be for the best.

“Consolidate your power, muster your strength and unleash the strongest strike you can. Your objective is to force the door to open. If you are unable to open the door before Yuanfu, you don’t need to come back here again after stepping into Yuanfu.” The old man calmly explained, causing Qin Wentian’s gaze to freeze slightly.

Everything the Azure Emperor left behind required one’s cultivation base to be below that of Yuanfu. The Jun Lin Banquet, the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds, as well as the door to the last entrance. The prerequisite for all of these was for one’s cultivation base to be below that of Yuanfu.

Could it be that the ‘test’ on the last level would be even tougher compared to the Jun Lin Banquet as well as the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds?

Besides, the current him had already cultivated the Fiend Transformation Art.

At this moment, Qin Wentian didn’t realize that a glow of light was flickering within the depths of the old guardian’s eyes. In these thousands of years, Qin Wentian was undoubtedly the one closest to completing all the tests set by the Azure Emperor.

Currently Qin Wentian should have already cultivated the Fiend Transformation Art. If he still wasn't able to succeed in opening the door the last entrance, no one knew how long it would be for another student to arrive where Qin Wentian was currently at.

Let's hope the little fellow would succeed.

Qin Wentian stood before the door to the last entrance. It had already been sealed for over thousands of years, but despite this, the exterior of the door was spotlessly clean, dust free and even seemed to gleam with a light of its own.

Qin Wentian's arterial pathways were seething as the Divine Yuan within his body transmitted to his arms. Erupting forth with a pressure capable of toppling mountains, he slammed his fist into the door.

RUMBLE! A thunderous sound rang out, but that door didn't show the slightest inclination of being opened. Obviously, the power behind Qin Wentian's earlier strike was not enough.

A demonic Qi emanated forth from Qin Wentian's body. His aura transformed completely in an instant. Taking a step forwards, he smashed his fist into the door once again. However, the door still didn't waver in the slightest.

"Hu... how strong exactly is this door?" Qin Wentian's eyes were filled with resolution as his blood boiled in his body. His aura transformed yet again; the force field of absolute obedience was tinged with a demonic presence, as though he was a Paragon of all

demons.

The Divine Yuan Energy within his body frenziedly surged as he stepped forwards yet again. His left palm executed the Forgotten Imprint while his right palm executed the Falling Mountain Palms .

BOOM! The impact was so great that the entire space shook, causing those who were browsing for innate techniques on the lower levels to stare up at the ceiling, wondering what the hell just happened.

Upon hearing the terrifying noises caused by Qin Wentian's powerful blow, the old man's heart trembled involuntarily. This indicated that Qin Wentian had a probability of opening the door to the last entrance.

However, Qin Wentian's eyes narrowed as his gaze turned incomparably sharp. Even when he output so much power, he still had no way of opening the door.

Clang, Clang...

At this moment, the sounds of a bell tolling permeated the entire Emperor Star Academy, causing Qin Wentian to frown. Ever since he stepped into the academy, he had never heard such a sound before.

Qin Wentian quickly departed the Heavenly Star Pavilion, only to

see a crowd of students milling towards a certain direction.

“I’ve enrolled in the academy for three years. This is the first time I heard the bell for summoning all Elders and students of the academy ringing.” A voice sighed. All of the students who heard it could infer that an incident of terrifying proportions just happened.

Upon hearing the bell chimes, Qin Wentian’s eyes had an extremely cold light flickering within.

Is whatever that’s going to happen finally happening?

Qin Wentian followed the crowd and headed over in the direction of the Emperor Star Monuments. After a short span of time passed, crowds of people, numbered about several thousands, gathered underneath the Emperor Star Monuments and formed a magnificent sight.

“F*ck, that bunch of bastards from the Royal Academy are clearly and intentionally trying to stir up conflicts. If they want to fight, let’s fight. Do they think that our Emperor Star Academy is afraid of them?” Someone in the crowd shouted in anger.

“You’re right, the deaths of Senior Mountain and junior brother were most definitely caused by the Royal Clan borrowing the power of the Royal Academy. There’s no need for further proof.”

Very quickly, many voices of discussion rang out as the crowd

gradually understood what had just happened.

So it turned out that today, there were a few students of the Emperor Star Academy having their meal in the Royal Capital. Among them, there was a pretty girl that had her liberties taken by someone from the Royal Academy.

The students from the Emperor Star Academy were naturally infuriated, and thus a conflict erupted between both parties. However, those from the Royal Academy obviously came prepared and subjected the students from the Emperor Star Academy to ruthless humiliation and even made their move against the female students. However, a student belonging to the Emperor Star Academy managed to slip away and immediately spread the news and notified the academy. From hindsight, it was obvious that the conflict that arose today was intentional.

The scope of this news got larger and larger and, more and more people from both academies got embroiled within the dispute as fights broke out. Not only that, the Disciplinary Elder of the Royal Academy as well as the members of their Disciplinary Committee actually also went to the scene and crippled the cultivation bases of the students from the Emperor Star Academy.

The students belonging to the Royal Academy naturally didn't received any punishment.

Those with discerning eyes naturally understood that the Royal Academy was trying to ignite the sparks of anger within the Emperor Star Academy. They wanted to provoke the Emperor Star Academy into starting a war.

In addition to the deaths of Mountain and Zi Jun earlier, if the Emperor Star Academy still continued to tolerate these acts, they might as well forget all about it and disband the academy. If they still took no action, it was highly probable that a similar incident of this nature would occur again.

All the elders stood at the front. The one in the lead was Ren Qianxing, who was seen turning as he faced the crowd. In an instant, everyone turned silent as they waited for Ren Qianxing to speak.

“Recently, many things have happened. I believed that all of you already know the gist of it. The Emperor Star Academy may be facing an extremely difficult and challenging period in the coming days. And thus, if there are students who wish to leave the academy, I won’t force you to stay. In the future, after all the wind and waves die down, you all can come back again. Also, for students whose cultivation levels are below the 5th level of Arterial Circulation, there’s no way for you to help even if you insist on staying within the academy.”

Within the academy, students were the majority. Many of the students didn’t have high cultivation bases and would be of little help in the upcoming war, and hence, the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t force them to participate. Not only that, students below the 5th level of Arterial Circulation were also directly prohibited from participating.

If they participated, they would only be cannon fodder. The Emperor Star Academy didn’t need cannon fodder. All of their

students were the talented elites of the future, and it would be too much of a pity if they died like this.

AGM 171 – Confrontation In The Royal Capital

Lincoln was none other than the Disciplinary Student Leader in charge of the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal Academy. Currently, he and ten others belonging to the committee were strolling around the Royal Capital. However, his heart now was filled with worries.

He was naturally very clear about this period of turmoil within the Royal Capital. His action back then, crippling the cultivation of students from the Emperor Star Academy, was forced onto him by the upper echelons in the Royal Academy. In reality, he had not wanted to do so and was unwilling to be pulled into the storm. However, in the face of the orders he received, he had no way defy them.

Hence, at this moment, his heart was filled with worries. He was worried about the revenge the Emperor Star Academy would take. He had already planned to request a transfer from his superiors to see if it was possible for him to temporarily hide away from the erupting storms of conflict.

Ssst~ Abruptly, a surge of monstrously sharp Qi gushed forth, causing Lincoln's pupils to contract. After which he saw numerous arrows falling down from the sky, shining with resplendent Astral Light, giving testament to the fact that these arrows were all manifested from Astral Energy.

Lincoln instantly released his Astral Souls as the aura of an 8th level Arterial Circulation Base emanated forth. He sent out

numerous palm strikes targeting the arrows falling from the skies, wanting to destroy all of the arrows. However, it was as though the arrows had eyes of their own. They actually shifted from the path of their trajectory, dodging his palm strikes and piercing through the other ordinary members of the Royal Academy's Disciplinary Committee.

Sounds of piercing unceasingly rang out. The fired arrows penetrated through their throats, drawing fresh blood as Lincoln's emotions instantly plunged to the bottom of the abyss.

He had not expected that revenge would come so swiftly.

An instant later, a sharp sword sliced Lincoln's neck. His body slumped down to the ground, as his eyes closed in eternal rest. This team of cultivators from the Royal Academy were all dead, and the blood flowing from their throats dyed the entire ground red.

Several moments later, when the citizens realised the death of these cultivators clad in armor, their hearts couldn't help but to palpitate wildly. Was the incoming storm finally here?

Ji Qing was one of the Elders in charge of the Disciplinary Committee from the Royal Academy. His cultivation base was at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, and he had extraordinary combat prowess. At this moment, his brows were tightly knitted.

Currently, the entire Royal Academy was in a state of tension. Everyone knew that their war with the Emperor Star Academy was

imminent and would break out anytime. Not only that, this dispute would be at an unprecedented level because the upper echelons of the Royal Academy wanted to completely eradicate the Emperor Star Academy's existence.

“Elder Ji.” A student within the academy bowed as Ji Qing walked by, to which Ji Qing only casually waved away since he was currently deep in thought.

“Elder Ji.” Yet another student greeted.

“Mmm.” Ji Qing nonchalantly waved the greeting away. As he continued walking forwards, at this very moment, a strong sense of danger assailed his senses.

The ‘student’ who bowed to him instantly closed the distance between them. And because of the close proximity, as well as the fact that Ji Qing never would have expected that there would people daring to ambush him within the grounds of the Royal Academy, Ji Qing was utterly unable to react in time.

His body glowed with terrifying Astral Light as an armour made from Astral Energy manifested. He only had the time to focus all his strength in defense.

Puchi! A sharp edge of a terrifying black sword penetrated through his armor, right into his heart. After which, the assailant violently twisted the sword and transmitted his Astral Energy into it, causing Ji Qing's heart to combust. Dumbfounded, Ji Qing could only stare in shock at the cold and unfeeling eyes of his assailant,

similar to the god of death.

Even if Ji Qing couldn't react in time, with his cultivation base at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, in addition to his extraordinary combat prowess, there was no way he would be so easily assassinated. To be able to do this clearly showed that there was only one reason – the strength of his assailant was many times stronger when compared to his own.

The commotion caused those from afar to shift their gazes over, only to see the body of Ji Qing slowly slumping to the ground. Upon seeing this, the hearts of the crowd trembled violently, as panic reflected on their faces. By this time, the unknown figure that was the assailant had already disappeared from the vision of the crowd.

“Elder Ji Qing was assassinated.” A roar rang out, causing the originally already nervous atmosphere to be ignited again. An instant later, several silhouettes appeared next to the body of Ji Qing.

“Lock down the Royal Academy!” someone shouted out in rage.

“It's useless. Since the other party could easily infiltrate in here and kill Ji Qing in an instant, he would definitely have a way to safely escape,” a person whispered, causing the crowd to turn silent.

Ji Qing was none other than the Disciplinary Elder who crippled

the cultivation bases of the students from the Emperor Star Academy. It was obvious as to who the culprit was behind the assassination of Ji Qing.

The Emperor Star Academy didn't roll out their war drums and hoist their war flags; instead, they directly responded with the most straightforward method. If the Royal Academy wanted to continue playing their little tricks in the dark, the Emperor Star Academy would be most willing to oblige.

Tooth for tooth, blood for blood.

As the news of Lincoln and Ji Qing was spread outwards, that already tight string of tension could snap at any moment.

Finally, on a clear morning, several experts mounted demonic beasts as they flew out from the Royal Academy. Beneath them, there were also crowds of cultivators, all moving towards the direction of the Emperor Star Academy.

The Emperor Star Academy received the news quickly. They were naturally monitoring the movements and action of the Royal Academy extremely closely.

The moment they received the news, those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy also set out.

At the same time, many experts belonging to the Ye Clan and Ou Clan were also making their way towards the Emperor Star

Academy.

The intensity of this storm quickly engulfed the Royal Capital. Currently, there were countless gazes watching the Emperor Star Academy as well as the Royal Academy, focused on each and every one of their movements.

Today, both the academies no longer made any movements in the dark. Instead, they openly mobilised all experts they could muster.

Such a news could definitely be compared to the scale of a great earthquake, causing the entire Royal Academy to shake with it.

The Emperor Star Academy wanted to clash directly with the Royal Capital, but everyone also knew that the support behind the Royal Academy was none other than the Royal Clan of Chu.

In the Divine Weapon Pavilion, An Liuyan stood near a window, sighing. Yang Chen stood behind her telling her about the movements of both the academies.

“The crisis the Emperor Star Academy is facing this time around will be many times more difficult to resolve compared to the last.” An Liuyan intoned in a low voice.

“Doesn’t the Emperor Star Academy also have a backer?” Yang Chen inquired.

“I guess the Azure Emperor Palace. But according to what I know,

the influence of the Azure Faction, who supports the Emperor Star Academy, within the Azure Emperor Palace is getting increasingly weaker. Back then when Luo Tianya wanted to take action against the Emperor Star Academy, it was also because of the Xiao Clan – one of the three factions of the Nine Mystical Palace. But because of the interference from the Azure Emperor Palace, they had no choice but to compromise. This time around, however, taking into account that Xiao Lan had personally arrived in Chu, it shows that the Nine Mystical Palace already accounted for the interference of the Azure Emperor Palace in their considerations.”

An Liuyan slowly spoke, but Yang Chen was still confused. After all, he only interacted with people of An Liuyan’s level and was unsure of how powerful places like the Nine Mystical Palace and Azure Emperor Palace were. However, he faintly knew that with her capabilities, An Liuyan was no pushover either.

Other than the Divine Weapon Pavilion, the Star River Association as well as the other major powers were all paying close attention.

Within the Royal Capital, on a vast expanse of flat ground, the members belonging to the Emperor Star Academy and Royal Academy all ceased their movements. They were about a few thousand metres apart from each other, each emitting terrifying pressure and their battle intents trying to cow the other.

In the airspace above both academies, flying-type demonic beasts and Yuanfu-level experts hovered in the air. There was a total of over a hundred Yuanfu cultivators altogether, and this was also the first time they would be directly clashing. From this, one could see

how strong the two powers were.

Back then when Qin Wentian was still in Sky Harmony City, it was extremely rare to even see a single Yuanfu-level Cultivator.

On the ground, students at the Arterial Circulation realm stood there. Their countenances were solemn and their gazes were heavy as they stood in formation.

The Emperor Star Academy didn't force their students to participate in this upcoming war. However, cultivators of the martial paths all had hearts full of hot blood. How could they stand aside and watch idly, adopting the behaviour of a coward when the academy was going to war? As long as they were at the 3rd level of Arterial Circulation and above, the majority of the students chose to participate, despite the prohibitions laid down by the Emperor Star Academy.

At this moment, both party had several hundreds of Arterial Circulation Cultivators, akin to a small-scaled army.

Both parties stood there, silent. The atmosphere was so stifling that it felt even harder for the spectating parties to breathe than for those who were present.

For the operation this time around, the leader representing the Emperor Star Academy was Ren Qianxing. Although in the past he rarely appeared in front of the crowds, almost everyone knew who he was at this point. Ren Qianxing's real designation was one of

the three vice-headmasters of the Emperor Star Academy.

The strength level of the leaders representing the Royal Academy couldn't be compared to Ren Qianxing. However, their statuses were all extremely shocking. They were Xiao Lan from the Nine Mystical Palace, the 3rd Prince of Chu, Chu Tianjiao, as well as the Crown Prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lǚ.

The three of them stood atop an incredibly powerful demonic beast, gazing downwards with arrogance in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy. Beside them, there were also several powerful figures belonging to the Royal Academy.

The Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Academy were all sizing up each other. Qin Wentian was also there. He stood at the forefront of a square-shape formation on the side of the Emperor Star Academy.

Within the square-shaped formation, the people there consisted of Qin Wentian, Luo Huan, Fan Le, Luo Cheng, Yu Fei and the other elites. They were going to be the vanguards of the academy, and if war really did erupt, they had to strike fast and hard, directly crushing their opponent's morale.

There was a need to formulate a strategy even in chaotic fights.

A cold glint of light flickered in his eyes as Qin Wentian saw the formations of the Royal Academy. Within one of their formations, he saw Orchon as well as members from the Knight's Association standing within. They were all nurtured by the Emperor Star

Academy, but now, they actually stood on the side of the Royal Academy, wanting to take action against the place that nurtured them.

“I can give the Emperor Star Academy one more chance. If you all are willing to merge with my Royal Academy, the terms will still be the same as what I listed out before.” Chu Tianjiao’s eyes stared at Ren Qianxing with a hint of provocation as he calmly spoke.

Ren Qianxing’s only response was to stare coldly back at him.

Chu Tianjiao gave a cold laugh, as he stared at the students of the Emperor Star Academy below. “If you all leave now, I will leave you untouched. Wanting to clash against us based on your level of strength? That’s not a wise decision.”

As the sound of Chu Tianjiao’s voice faded, sounds of war horses galloping could be heard in the horizon. These new arrivals were none other than those from the Ye and Ou Clan. They were willing to stand on the side of the Royal Academy to do battle.

In terms of numbers, the Royal Academy held absolute advantage.

Everyone was motionless but there were some students of the Emperor Star Academy whose hearts had already started to waver. This didn’t meant that they wanted to forsake the battle, but their initial confidence of winning was definitely already shaken. Originally, after the merger of the Royal Academy and the Godly

General Martial Palace, they already had an advantage in terms of numbers, not to mention now that the joint power mustered by the noble clans of Chu arrived. The Emperor Star Academy was surrounded by enemies from all sides.

Only to see that at this moment, a silhouette stepped out, causing those from the Emperor Star Academy to be stunned.

Qin Wentian took a few steps forwards, standing in front of those from the Emperor Star Academy. He inclined his head, his gaze looking at the silhouettes hovering in the air.

“Despite the support the Royal Academy had from the Royal Clan, they were still sorely suppressed by the Emperor Star Academy for over thousands of years. And now, in order to deal with the Emperor Star Academy, they merged with the Godly General Martial Palace and resorted to several underhanded means in a bid to steal our position.” Qin Wentian serenely continued, “Get out of here. There’s no one that can replace our position. We are from the Emperor Star Academy.”

During his speech, Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd was already grasped in his hands as his long hair fluttered behind him, appearing as though he basking in the glory that originated from being part of the Emperor Star Academy. At this moment, those from the Emperor Star Academy could feel the blood in their bodies getting heated up. To deal with them, the Royal Clan cracked their brains and resorted to many underhanded methods. This by itself was already a type of glory.

They, were from the Emperor Star Academy!

AGM 172 – Unrivalled Below Yuanfu

Being able to last through the ages up till now, regardless of which era, the Emperor Star Academy was always heralded with glory. Today, they would be facing the most challenging battle of all time in the history of the Emperor Star Academy.

Qin Wentian stood at the very front, with his ancient halberd held in his hands. The blood in his entire body was boiling, as his demeanor became increasingly fiendish. His physique also grew taller and stronger — the demonic aura he exuded made it seem as though he was a monarch, the overlord of all things under the heavens.

His eyes blazing with battle intent, the sight of him caused the blood and spirits of those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy to store. Today, they fought for honor, for the survival of the Emperor Star Academy.

In the direction of the Royal Academy, similarly, there were several silhouettes that stepped out. Among these were Orchon, Hou Tie, Chu Chen, and Leng Ya. Although their troop arrangement was many times more powerful compared to the Emperor Star Academy, when the students of the Emperor Star Academy saw Qin Wentian standing in the lead, their previous worries all melted away. Not long ago, Qin Wentian completely dominated the challenge battle at the Royal Academy.

From both the left and right, the sounds of horses galloping could be heard. The young clansman of the Ou and Ye Clan were stirring, making their moves.

However, despite their disadvantages in numbers, the Emperor Star Academy only recruited students who were Stellar Martial Cultivators. Each and every one of them had an Astral Soul.

Boom! The students of the academy also started to gallop forth. They were grouped into countless smaller formations, with their archers situated at the back, firing their arrows in the direction of the Emperor Star Academy.

The battle finally begun.

Qin Wentian stepped forth, snarling in rage, it was as though all his anger and hatred turned into a boundless terrifying energy that was channeled into his ancient halberd. The ancient halberd transformed into a stream of light as it was flung out, slashing across the void, emitting an explosive sound akin to the roar of an angered demonic dragon.

Orchon and the rest bore the brunt of the attack. As they faced the ancient halberd that flew towards them with stiffened countenances, their bodies dodged to the side. The after-shock caused by Qin Wentian's strike was so sharp that it nicked their faces, causing them to feel a burning sensation.

Puchi. The ancient halberd completely penetrated though a person behind them as the force of the momentum continued forth unabated amidst screams of panic. Sounds of bodies being pierced continuously rang out, stopping only after the third person was killed. The situation over at the side the of the Royal Academy where the ancient halberd flew to momentarily turned chaotic.

Qin Wentian, how terrifying had his strength grown to?

Only to see him taking another step forwards, as a second ancient halberd appeared within his hands. This time around, the ancient halberd he took out was a Divine Weapon shining with resplendent Astral Light. When paired with that tyrannical, fiendishly handsome countenance of Qin Wentian, Orchon and the rest felt a surge of overwhelming pressure gushing towards them as terror struck their hearts. They were actually more than a little afraid of Qin Wentian.

Fan Le and the rest followed closely behind Qin Wentian. Their formation was to be the vanguard of the Emperor Star Academy, consisting of Emperor Star Academy's strongest Arterial Circulation cultivators. They only had one mission — to kill, to ruthlessly kill, and wreak total annihilation.

On both the left and right of them, there were two great formations formed by the Emperor Star Academy's side, acting as protectors for Qin Wentian's team, preventing them from being encircled.

Fan Le also unleashed his Bloodline Limit as arrows explosively rained down from the skies, their appearance akin to golden lightning.

HOWL. Savage roars and howls echoed in the air from the Royal Academy. Beside Orchon, there was another square formation where the cultivators within all released their Beast-type Astral

Souls. The roars and howls of their Astral Souls formed a cacophony akin to that of 10,000 beasts roaring in cohesion, exhibiting an extremely overbearing aura.

Qin Wentian didn't bother about them. He took the lead and rushed forwards, arriving in front of Orchon and the others. Fan Le's arrows protected him on his left and right side, the golden arrows following his every steps.

As Fan Le grew stronger, his powers of psyche force had already reach a certain standard. Currently, it was extremely simple for him to control the flight of his Astral Arrows.

The one facing Qin Wentian directly was none other than Orchon. By his side was Hou Tie, while behind him was Chu Chen. Despite the advantage in numbers, when Orchon sensed the aura Qin Wentian was emanating, he felt his body go weak, completely devoid of strength. He had never once imagined that Qin Wentian's aura would be so overbearing to such an extent where he would resemble an indestructible fiendgod.

Bzzz! Qin Wentian made his move, his speed as quick as a bolt of lightning.

The first strike of his was none other than Mountain Splitter of the Great Dream Halberd Art.

Powered by his Bloodline Limit, as well as augmentation granted by the Fiend Transformation Art, the might of this strike was something that far exceeded Orchon's imagination. Not only that,

the power of the strike was also increased by the boosting effects of his ancient halberd.

At this moment, however, Orchon could only defend in response. His long Divine Spear exploded forth like a blooming lotus as ten millions filaments of light burst out, inundating the area with silver light.

However, the moment the lotus bloomed, it was immediately shattered by the tyrannical aura of the halberd. The petals of the lotus shimmered as they transformed into fragments, dissipating along with the wind. When the overbearing aura gushed forth, it was as though there was nothing Qin Wentian's ancient halberd couldn't conquer. Orchon's heart was penetrated an instant later, causing many to be dumbstruck. After which, Qin Wentian let out a roar of rage as he lifted the impaled body of Orchon up in the air.

“Those who block me, die!”

The roar of anger resonated in the air. The movements of those from the Royal Academy slowed as their eyes widened, looking at the body of Orchon propped up in the air.

Death in a single strike.

At this moment, it was as though time completely stopped. The countenances of the Yuanfu cultivators from the Ou Clan who were hovering in the air all went pale white. What a tyrannical slaughter!

Below Yuanfu, other than Qin Wentian, there was no one else able to manifest such a tyrannical aura.

An old man from the Ou Clan convulsed involuntarily as he emitted an intense killing intent. A visible green vein bulged atop his forehead; he wanted nothing more than to tear Qin Wentian apart. However, he couldn't do so.

This was merely a few chaotic clashes between the 'armies' of both sides, and the participants could slaughter those from the other camp freely. The unspoken rules of this war were clear to both the academies. Currently the Yuanfu cultivators on both sides had not join the battle as of yet because they were all afraid. The moment Yuanfu cultivators joined in, killing the Arterial Circulation cultivators in cold blood, the 'end game' would be already set in motion. Those at Arterial Circulation would be mere cannon fodder. Neither of the academies wanted to initiate such a move unless they were sure of their own advantage.

Chu Tianjiao obviously shared the same sentiment; he didn't want the war to enter the 'end game' state yet. Although they held the advantage in terms of numbers, if he were to compare the power levels of experts at the Yuanfu realm, the Royal Academy didn't have as great an advantage as they would like to have. Thus, he preferred to slowly whittle the strength of the Emperor Star Academy, reducing the numbers of their students even more. After all the students of the Emperor Star Academy were dead, the academy wouldn't have any more reasons for existing, right?

On the other hand, if he jumped straight to the 'end game', allowing the scale of the battle to grow even larger, even Chu

Tianjiao didn't have absolute confidence in his own safety. What if the Emperor Star Academy had a secret task force of a few old freaks ganging up on him to kill him? Who would dare to say he would still be alive?

And so, until the very last moment, Chu Tianjiao was unwilling to do such a thing. He also knew that there was no way the Emperor Star Academy would initiate by sending out their Yuanfu cultivators. Because the moment they did so, the Royal Academy would respond in kind. One must know that in front of Yuanfu, cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm had no way to resist at all. The Emperor Star Academy would definitely not want to see their students dying in a blood bath.

Hence, these unspoken rules were concurred by both parties to allow students below Yuanfu to clash first.

Nobody dared to break that thin line of balance.

After Qin Wentian slayed Orchon, the battle once again erupted in intensity. The spirits of those from the Emperor Star Academy soared up to their brims as they went all out, attacking in a frenzy.

At the same time, many sought to encircle Qin Wentian. Their intentions were obvious with merely a single glance.

If Qin Wentian died in the frenzy of such a chaotic battle, it just meant that he was useless. Even if Gongyang Hong wanted to pursue, who would he pursue? None of the Yuanfu cultivators made a move against Qin Wentian.

But whenever Qin Wentian killed a member of their academy, the hearts of those from the Royal Academy couldn't help but shudder.

The current Qin Wentian was many times more powerful compared to the time when he had competed in the Jun Lin Banquet. No wonder Sikong Mingyue wasn't his opponent, easily getting trounced by Qin Wentian.

Executing the Garuda Movement Technique, Qin Wentian was like the wind. A pressure akin to mountains falling erupted as he blasted forth with his left palms, while the ancient halberd in his right slaughtered out a path of blood. He was unstoppable.

Luo Cheng's sabre, Yu Fei's sword, Luo Huan's control as well as Fan Le's arrows all moved in accordance to Qin Wentian's movements. Their coordination was akin to a killing machine, breaking the formations of students from the Royal Academy.

BOOOM. Deafening roars rang out as a multitude of palm shadows flew towards Qin Wentian, seeking to bury Qin Wentian within. Chu Chen stood behind, amplifying the power levels of those attacking Qin Wentian. In battles like this, the effects of his Astral Soul was one of the best.

The ancient halberd weaved about in a beautiful dance, as an illusory form of the Xuanwu Turtle manifested around Qin Wentian. A series of explosions echoed, but the barrier formed by the Xuanwu Turtle withstood the attacks. Despite the

amplifications, their attacks were still unable to breach his defense.

Sizzzz! A resplendent light flickered as the ancient halberd swept out, tracing beautiful arcs in the air. Qin Wentian flickered; he treaded the air, flying towards Chu Chen while simultaneously executing the Fallen Mountain Palms innate technique with both soles of his feet.

Chu Chen's countenance stiffened. He knew that with Qin Wentian's current level of power, if he was determined to kill someone, that person would definitely die.

Chu Chen rapidly retreated, but somehow Fan Le seemed to know what Qin Wentian was thinking and fired his arrows, cutting off the paths of retreat for Chu Chen.

Chu Chen's countenance turned extremely unsightly. Qin Wentian's fiendishly good looking eyes shot out a ray of light into the eyes of Chu Chen. Having lost himself in the endless depths of Qin Wentian's eyes, Chu Chen was unable to muster any semblance of defense.

Chi!

Even when the ancient halberd slashed into his head, Chu Chen was still lost inside his dreams, unaware of his impending doom. That momentary lapse of concentration was already enough to determine his fate.

Orchon was dead, as well as Chu Chen from the Royal Clan.

These two who just died were ranked among the top few cultivators in the Jun Lin Banquet. Upon witnessing such a scenario, the countenances of the Yuanfu cultivators from the Royal Academy turned ashen.

Despite having the absolute advantage in numbers, it seemed that everything was useless in front of Qin Wentian. His team formation alone could cut through the team formations of students from the Royal Academy like a hot knife through butter, displaying absolute strength.

Qin Wentian was too strong within the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Resplendent lights flickered in the eyes of those from the Emperor Star Academy. When Qin Wentian had volunteered to be the vanguard, they were still afraid that he would encounter encirclement. But now after seeing his tyrannical combat prowess, all of their worries melted into the thin air.

If no Yuanfu cultivator stepped out, Qin Wentian was undefeatable.

For those at the Arterial Circulation Realm, even counting those from the Nine Mystical Palace, the current Qin Wentian could be considered the number one existence. He was unrivalled below Yuanfu!

AGM 173 – Scheme

On the battlefield, hovering in the air, Orchon's father had an expression of extreme agony on his face.

Orchon's talent could be considered several times above average; in the Ou Clan, he had been one of the few talented youngster who was truly worth nurturing, and yet now, he was actually felled by Qin Wentian. He would never forget that his younger son, Orfon, had been killed by Qin Wentian as well.

The green vein on his forehead throbbed visibly, as his killing intent soared to its limits.

“That useless Janus.” Orchon's father silently cursed. Janus, who had been Orchon's personal teacher, had an extremely close relationship with him. He had secretly provided a large amount of cultivation resources to Janus, and as long as Janus succeeded in the assassination of Qin Wentian, he would arrange Janus's escape as well as provide him with abundant rewards.

However, Janus had failed, which in turn caused the death of Orchon today. He couldn't help but to blame himself; if he had attached more importance to Qin Wentian back then, regardless of the cost, he would have arranged for Yuanfu cultivators to assassinate him long ago.

Currently, Qin Wentian was invincible in the realm of Arterial Circulation. If anyone wanted to kill him, they could only do so by using Yuanfu experts, but Chu Tianjiao wasn't willing to disrupt

the thin line of balance that quickly.

Despite their advantage in numbers, the Royal Academy suffered defeat after defeat everywhere. Most of them were equal in strength with the other formations of the Emperor Star Academy and would require quite a lengthy period of time to finish them. However Qin Wentian was different; as long as he saw a slightly stronger formation, he would immediately head over to destroy the students there. He was unstoppable, and if that was the case, the defeat of the Royal Academy would come sooner or later.

Upon seeing this happening, Orchon's father was secretly happy in his heart. He whispered, "Your Highness, if Qin Wentian doesn't die, it'd be extremely tough for us to obtain victory."

Chu Tianjiao cast a glance at Orchon's father. Naturally, he could tell what Orchon's father was thinking. After a few moments, his gaze flickered as he shouted out a command, "Disperse."

As the sound of the command rang out, the students of the Royal Academy were in full retreat. Having seen their opponents retreating, the spirits of the students belonging to the Emperor Star Academy soared even higher. With the taste of victory in their mouths, they chased after their opponents seeking to kill them, but despite of this, they were still clear-headed enough to know when to stop. After all, there were still numerous Yuanfu cultivators around. If they went too far, no one knew what would happen.

Eventually, both camps retreated to their original positions. Copses lay strewn about in the middle of the battlefield, their

blood dying the ground red.

Although the two sides only clashed for a short period of time, the casualties already amounted to over 80 deaths. This was the cruel reality of war.

On both sides, there were many with reddened eyes. Those who died out there earlier were all their friends. Not so long ago, they just gathered together and had been making merry, but to think that now they all became ice-cold corpses. Only now did they understand the cruelty of reality. In the future, if they wanted to become stronger, they would undoubtedly have to experience things that were even worse than this.

Qin Wentian stood in front of the crowd belong to the Emperor Star Academy, raising his head and shifting his gaze to those Yuanfu cultivators standing in the air. The cold arrogance in his eyes was tinged with a terrifying demonic killing intent.

The students in the Royal Capital were all young people. Initially, this place was supposed to be a heaven for those seeking to cultivate, but now, because of the fight for power, it had become a battlefield where the students were slaughtered in cold blood.

Chu Tianjiao and the rest similarly stared back at Qin Wentian, as murderous urges flickered in their eyes. Qin Wentian was already on their list of 'to-be-killed' targets. The reason why they couldn't do so was because of their fear of the reprisal actions the Emperor Star Academy would take.

“Retreat.” Chu Tianjiao coldly hollered. At his command, those from the Royal Academy began to withdraw.

“Return to the academy.” Ren Qianxing commanded, and those from the Emperor Star Academy also started to withdraw.

Although the Emperor Star Academy won this clash, nobody felt at ease. On the contrary, everyone felt as though they had the weight of a mountain on their back, their hearts all filled with heaviness. This was merely the beginning of the war.

In a hall within the Royal Academy, Xiao Lan, Chu Tianjiao, as well as those from the Ye and Ou Clan were all gathered there.

Xiao Lan’s fingers drummed on his arm rest, but he had an extremely heavy look upon his countenance. Naturally, he was exceptionally unhappy with the results of the previous clash.

“I don’t wish to stay in Chu for too long. At most, within three months, the Emperor Star Academy must be ours.” Xiao Lan’s faint voice seemed as though he was giving out a death command that must be accomplished at all cost. To obtain the secret hidden within the Emperor Star Academy by the Azure Emperor, the first step was for the Emperor Star Academy to submit to them. If they refused, destruction was the only remaining way left. However, he didn’t have the time to stay here for so long.

He still had many formidable opponents waiting for him within the nine main states. If he remained here for too long, the cultivation of his opponents may outstrip him by miles when he returned. If that was the case, that would be extremely shameful.

“Young Master Xiao, I don’t think there would be anyone that could match Qin Wentian in the Arterial Circulation Realm.” Orchon’s father said, “If we want the Emperor Star Academy, we have no choice but to win the battle with our Yuanfu cultivators.”

Xiao Lan was unperturbed when he heard the suggestion. He turned to Chu Tianjiao and asked, “What are your thoughts on this?”

Chu Tianjiao was silent for a moment before he replied in a low voice, “I will find some extremely powerful Arterial Circulation Realm cultivators from our military and insert them into our Royal Academy before engaging in Arterial Circulation warfare again.”

“And if you still failed to be victorious?” Xiao Lan asked again.

“If that’s the case, we would have no choice but to engage them with Yuanfu cultivators.” Chu Tianjiao calmly spoke. The Yuanfu experts were all talented elites of Chu. If he could avoid the battle at the Yuanfu-level, naturally he would avoid it. Because once the war started, the overall strength of the Chu Country would surely suffer.

“Qin Wentian, he...” Orchon’s father was as though he wanted to intentionally remind Chu Tianjiao.

“If a Yuanfu cultivator killed Qin Wentian, the Emperor Star Academy would surely not sit back and do nothing. And if we infuriated Gongyang Hong, who’s going to bear the brunt of his displeasure?” Chu Tianjiao murmured as he stared straight back at Orchon’s father. He naturally understood what Orchon’s father was hinting at.

Chu Tianjiao also wanted Qin Wentian’s death, but he had to thoroughly consider all possibilities from different perspectives before making his move.

“We do not need to kill him.” Someone from the Ye Clan spoke. He was none other than Ye Liuyang.

“Old Ye, what do you have in mind?” Chu Tianjiao asked as he shifted his gaze to Ye Liuyang.

“There must be secrets hidden on Qin Wentian’s body. We could capture him alive. Even if we fail, the Emperor Star Academy and Gongyang Hong wouldn’t be infuriated. If we succeed, we won’t kill him. With him in our clutches, the Emperor Star Academy would surely restrain themselves from shooting the rats for fear of breaking the vases, and we would then be able to enjoy an advantage. If Gongyang Hong came and demanded Qin Wentian back, we could just release him then. But during this period of time, it will be sufficient for us to accomplish many things.”

Ye Liuyang had a scheming expression on his face, causing Chu Tianjiao’s eyes to brighten as he laughed, “Good plan! But how

should we proceed?”

Ye Liuyang swept a glance at Chu Tianjiao. From the serene-looking expression on Chu Tianjiao's countenance, he understood that Chu Tianjiao had long wanted to capture Qin Wentian alive. He was just waiting for others to make the suggestion. The meaning behind his actions went without saying.

The relationships between Qin Wentian and the Ye and Ou Clan was extremely bad.

“The Ou Clan will take the lead while our Ye Clan will assist.” Ye Liuyang spoke as he and Chu Tianjiao turned their gazes towards Orchon's father.

Orchon's father could only silently cursed their craftiness in his heart while maintaining a cordial expression on the surface. “Okay.”

“Since we have decided, you all can discuss and proceed with the plan.” Chu Tianjiao laughed, “No matter whether this succeeds or fails, I won't make things difficult for the people of both your clans.”

After returning to the academy, Qin Wentian immediately began his cultivation. The

intense battle earlier had exhausted the energy stored in his body

at an astonishing rate, so he used Yuan Meteor Stones to replenish his strength while condensing his Divine Yuan Energy simultaneously. When he finally recovered his strength, he could feel that his arterial pathways had seemingly undergone a change, as though they had somehow expanded. It was very obvious that fighting so intensely in such chaotic battles would stimulate his cultivation base, thus steadily increasing his strength.

In his heart, Qin Wentian was still extremely worried since his strength was still insufficient. If he was at Yuanfu, whereby his Arterial Pathways transformed into a spiral, the Astral Energy within his body would change to a liquid state as the form of his Yuanfu (Yuan Palace) was completed. The consumption of the Astral Energy he expended in the battle would be negligible that it was not worth mentioning.

At the Yuanfu Realm, the Astral Energy within one's body would be transformed into a liquid state. Every droplet of Yuan liquid contained an immense amount of Astral Energy.

At the same time, a Yuan Reservoir would form within one's body. As the Yuan Energy droplets filled the reservoir, one's storage of Astral Energy within the reservoir could be said to be almost limitless, never to be exhausted.

According to the level of one's cultivation, the stronger a person grew, the larger the Yuan Reservoir would expand, thus enabling more Yuan Energy droplets to be stored within. And once the cultivator stepped into the peak of Yuanfu, the Yuan Reservoir would transform into a Yuan Ocean. From there, one could nurture their Astral Soul within the ocean and eventually

condense an Astral Nova.

As to what comes after that, Qin Wentian was not very clear. Maybe it would be similar to what he saw in the memory fragments of that tiny Astral Being where the countless mighty existences standing outside of the Qin Heavenly Divine Sect could manifest actual terrifying constellations, but was that the realm after Heavenly Dipper? Qin Wentian couldn't be sure. Qin Wentian was wondering, how strong exactly was his damn old fogey? He should have been at a level so terrifying that was incomprehensible to the current Qin Wentian.

Thinking of this caused Qin Wentian to be slightly depressed. His dad was an extremely powerful paragon, but look at him now, struggling with setbacks at every corner. However, Qin Wentian also knew that true experts only reached where they stood now because they had their feet firmly planted on the ground, moving forward step by step, armed with nothing but determination. He believed that he would reach that level sooner or later.

After finishing his cultivation, Qin Wentian went to the Divine Weapon Pavilion once again. He wasn't worried about his own safety as he knew that Yuanfu experts from the Emperor Star Academy would protect him from the shadows.

An Liuyan personally received him herself. Qin Wentian then summoned several weaponsmiths to aid him in creating Divine Weapons as he inscribed the Divine Imprints onto them at a crazy speed.

Today, those weaponsmiths who witness Qin Wentian in action,

were all stunned into silence. Before this, they had heard many rumours about Qin Wentian, but today, after seeing his skill, they were truly impressed, almost to the point of reverence.

In the entirety of Chu, not many powers could afford the materials needed to create so many Divine Weapons. However, An Liuyan unceasingly accommodated his every request. Qin Wentian could only silently note down this favour in his heart.

After returning to the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian and the Elders disseminated the Divine Weapons to the more prominent students in preparation for their second clash against the Royal Academy.

And eventually, the second clash soon started, occurring at the same battlefield as the first.

This time round, there were even more people on the side of the Royal Academy; their numbers were about twice that of the Emperor Star Academy, grandiose and majestic, emitting a fearsome pressure. Those Yuanfu cultivators stood in the air, looking down from above as their killing aura permeated the air.

Qin Wentian stood there on the ground. He could sense the unfriendly gazes of hatred staring right at him. Raising his head, he looked up in the air and saw killing intent flickering in several pair of eyes.

Xiao Lan calmly glanced at Qin Wentian; the expression in his eyes was like someone looking down upon an ant-like existence.

He, who came from one of the factions of the Nine Mystical Palace, naturally wouldn't put Qin Wentian in his eyes. Since Qin Wentian spurned the opportunity he offered him, it meant that Qin Wentian's ending was already decided. If not for the deterrence of the Heavenly Dipper Sovereign, he would have sent people to finish off Qin Wentian long ago.

In his eyes, although Qin Wentian's talent could be considered pretty good, he didn't know how high the Heavens were. Not only that, in front of those superior to him, he also didn't know his place.

AGM 174 – Fatal Strike

Those from the Royal Academy separated into three major formations, advancing towards the students from the Emperor Star Academy in order to encircle them within.

Behind them, the archers from the Royal Academy had already retrieved the bows slung behind their backs and had their arrows nocked and ready, able to fire to kill at any moment.

“Are they from the military?” A cold light flickered in Ren Qianxing’s eyes, as he shifted his gaze to Chu Tianjiao, coldly stating, “Does Your Highness intend to use the forces from the military?”

The Elders of the Emperor Star Academy all had icy cold expressions in their eyes. Did Chu Tianjiao really want to force this war into the ‘end game’ state? If Chu Tianjiao borrowed the power of the military, regardless of how powerful their students might be, the military would just overrun them with pure numbers regardless of cost, obtaining a pyrrhic victory.

Luckily, the powers of the rebels were strong as well, making the Royal Academy unable to mobilize a large amount of soldiers to aid them in this endeavor. If not, the students from the Emperor Star Academy would definitely be done for.

“Elder should already know that those who enrolled in the Godly Military Martial Palace are the reserves of the military. Why do you find this so shocking?” Chu Tianjiao laughed, Ren Qianxing

wasn't able to see through him

“Archers.” Qin Wentian coldly shouted. A line of archers appeared behind the formations of the Emperor Star Academy. The skies were colored by Astral Light as arrows fired from both camps filled the skies, resulting in a rain of arrows.

Fan Le glanced at that rain of arrows and sighed. What a pity that his control over psyche force was still limited. If not, he could use the arrows their opponents fired against them. Despite this, the power of the fired arrows wouldn't be too great; at most, they could only disrupt the formations.

The Arterial Circulation Realm 'armies' of both parties advanced towards each other. Abruptly, a blinding radiance filled the air. Those at the Yuanfu level discovered that all students from the Emperor Star Academy were equipped with various kinds of Divine Weapons!

Qin Wentian had forged spears, swords, axe, shields, and all kinds of Divine Weapons, allowing the students of the Emperor Star Academy to choose what fit them best.

In the next instant, both 'armies' contacted and engaged each other. Rays after rays of cold light flashed. There was sword light, spear light, axe light, all tyrannical beyond comparison. In the blink of an eye, victory went to those belonging to the Emperor Star Academy. They slaughtered several of those from the Royal Academy effortlessly, while sustaining no casualties on their side.

“All of them are wielding Divine Weapons. Not only that, the Divine Weapons are at least of the 2nd-grade and above.” The Yuanfu-level silhouettes belonging to the Royal Academy all had extremely ugly expressions on their faces. Even with the support from the Royal Clan, equipping everyone with 2nd-grade Divine Weapons wasn’t a feat that they could duplicate.

“Seems like these weapons were all provided by the Divine Weapon Pavilion.” Chu Tianjiao’s eyes flickered. He had been tracking Qin Wentian’s movements and knew that he had been to the Divine Weapon Pavilion.

“We need to bring forward the plan.” Chu Tianjiao mumbled softly, as he laughed. “For this war of students, we can no longer remain on the fence. I have to apologise to the Elders from the Emperor Star Academy.”

The sound of Chu Tianjiao’s voice permeated the air. The countenances of those surrounding him turned solemn. Stepping forwards, the air was filled with a cacophony of cries from demonic beasts.

“What? He wants to force the endgame?” Those from the Emperor Star Academy couldn’t understand. Following the words of Chu Tianjiao, the Yuanfu cultivators who had hidden themselves away all began to show themselves, surrounding the Yuanfu cultivators from the Emperor Star Academy.

“Prepare for war.” Ren Qianxing calmly stated. The Yuanfu cultivators nodded and spread apart. Battles on the Yuanfu-level naturally required more space.

Very quickly, the entire air space was completely filled with Yuanfu experts. The impact of seeing such a scene was extremely great, causing those spectators viewing the war from afar to involuntarily tremble. The ultimate clash was beginning.

AWOOOOOOO... The roars of the demonic mounts tremble the air as both sides started to clash. Even Chu Tianjiao and Xiao Lan also joined the battle, seeking out their own opponents.

Dazzling Astral Souls were released simultaneously, engulfing the entire air space. The power of Yuanfu cultivators were extremely terrifying.

Qin Wentian's ancient halberd pierced into the heart of an opponent, finishing him off as he gazed up in the air. For some reason, his heart pounded with unease. He didn't expect that Chu Tianjiao would choose to force the endgame this fast.

This time round, Chu Tianjiao's determination was truly great indeed.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian felt his entire body go cold. In front of him, he could see a silhouette dashing in his direction. This person had hidden his identity and was mixed in within the Arterial Circulation cultivators from the Royal Academy. The sense of danger Qin Wentian could feel from him was exceedingly great.

Qin Wentian pulled out his ancient halberd as he retreated with explosive speed. However, the movement speed of the other

person was extremely quick. The assailant transformed into after-images as a gigantic palm was blasted in the direction of Qin Wentian. It was as though the assailant wanted to kill Qin Wentian in a single strike.

However, at that exact moment, a black shadow appeared. The black sword in his hands struck out, piercing into the gigantic palm, as a thunderous sound echoed. Remnants of the terrifying aura saturated the area. Evidently, fearing for the safety of Qin Wentian, the Emperor Star Academy had arranged for his protection.

One has to say, Chu Tianjiao's plan to move against Qin Wentian after initiating the battle of Yuanfu cultivators was extremely brilliant. Once the Yuanfu experts engaged in their battles, how would they have the time to concern themselves with other matters?

"They want to make a move against Wentian." Ren Qianxing coldly exclaimed. Momentarily, several Elders descended from the air. Their opponents immediately seized the chance to attack, barring their paths to Qin Wentian.

Ye Wuque descended from the air, his tri-colored sword slashed out in the direction of Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian gazed in the direction of that attack. The ancient halberd in his hands weaved about in a dance of frenzy, impenetrable by wind or rain.

Zzzzizzzz.. A great sword slashed downwards. Qin Wentian was forced to retreat. Beside him, the aura of the previous Yuanfu cultivator exploded forth, his palms aiming to grab hold of Qin

Wentian. Success seemed already within his grasp.

“Son of a bitch.” Fan Le raged. He rapidly fired his arrows, controlling them to fly towards the assailant, but each and every one of his arrows were effortlessly deflected by the other party.

The current Qin Wentian naturally didn’t hold a chance facing off against Ye Wuque. With the threat of an additional Yuanfu cultivator, his footwork began to get flustered.

“GET LOST.” A roar rumbled the air as Ren Qianxing tread the air with a golden sword equipped in his hands. Abruptly, he swung his sword in a horizontal arc, and a terrifying golden light lacerated the void apart, severing the necks of a few enemy Yuanfu experts as their heads rolled to the ground.

Ren Qianxing flickered as he disappeared from sight, moving in Qin Wentian’s direction.

Ye Wuque delivered yet another strike from the air. No matter how powerful one was at the Arterial Circulation Realm, the overwhelming disparity between that and Yuanfu was something that could never be mitigated.

Howling in rage, Qin Wentian’s long hair fluttered behind him. His arm travelled in a wild arc as he launched his ancient halberd explosively into the air. However at that moment, Qin Wentian’s countenance turned pale. He felt a terrifying sense of impending doom approaching him from behind his back.

He at this moment didn't have time to turn and defend any more. He could only frenziedly dredge up the Divine Energy in his body, circulating it to protect his back.

Puchi! A crisp sound rang out as an excruciating pain wrenched his gut. A dagger pierced inside his body, stabbing his heart. Did they really want Qin Wentian to die?

“WENTIAN!” Their countenances turning pale. Luo Huan and Fan Le stood motionlessly, not daring to believe their eyes. Luo Huan's beautiful eyes lost all hints of their allure as she grasp at the empty air in front of her.

Why? WHY? Why, after Mountain's death? Qin Wentian still had to die?

Fan Le's felt a biting pain in his heart. At this moment, he was completely filled with anguish. That carefree young man who was kind to his friends and family and merciless to his enemies...Qin Wentian was his best friend, his brother. Was he going to die today?

Chu Tianjiao gazed downwards, shock apparent in his eyes. Obviously, killing Qin Wentian wasn't part of his plans.

Then if that was the case, was it the Ye Clan or the Ou Clan that took methods into their own hands?

At this moment, however, confusion appeared on the faces of

both the Ye and Ou Clan members. Who exactly was that man who pierced the short sword into Qin Wentian's heart?

“DIE!” Ren Qianxing howled in madness. He had finally caught up and directly slammed his palms into the head of the attacker, exploding his head. The attacker should have already known his fate the moment he decided to kill Qin Wentian. There was no way the Emperor Star Academy would allow Qin Wentian's killer to escape alive.

Ye Wuque had already retreated. He knew that he would be in danger if he continued staying, only to see Ren Qianxing emanating a monstrous killing intent, sending palm strikes in all directions as students from the Royal Academy suffered an absolute massacre.

Ren Qianxing had truly gone mad with anger.

He looked up in the air, staring at Chu Tianjiao. Chu Tianjiao's heart involuntarily shuddered; this had been an accident, not part of the plan. What he feared most had come true, and this ending would undoubtedly drive the Emperor Star Academy into a frenzy.

“I didn't have any intentions to kill Qin Wentian.” Chu Tianjiao spoke, but he knew it was useless when he saw the expression in Ren Qianxing's eyes. He could only laugh bitterly in response. At this point of time, explanations were already useless.

Ren Qianxing carried the body of Qin Wentian as he flew up the air, simultaneously using an immense amount of Astral Energy to

close Qin Wentian's wounds. He roared out a command, "Return."

The eyes of those from the Emperor Star Academy were all red, their killing intents soaring to the skies. But after hearing the command given by Ren Qianxing, all of them still obeyed.

Chu Tianjiao waved his hands, signalling that no one should pursue. The death of Qin Wentian had completely ignited the madness of the Emperor Star Academy. He was afraid that they would really go all out, choosing to sacrifice everything.

Landing on the ground, he stopped beside the corpse of the killer whom Ren Qianxing had beheaded. It wasn't going to be so easy to determine the identity of this man.

"Things are getting troublesome." Chu Tianjiao murmured. He didn't know if that dagger truly claimed Qin Wentian's life.

However, Chu Tianjiao recovered quickly. Since the deed was already done, it was useless to keep thinking about it. What he needed to do now was to plan how he should handle the retaliations from the now crazed Emperor Star Academy.

"What do you plan to do?" Xiao Lan landed beside him, his countenance calm. He wasn't too bothered; since things already came to this stage, it might be a blessing instead.

"Attacking is the best defense." Chu Tianjiao replied, his gaze flickering. Now, what they should do was to press on with the

attack, suppress the Emperor Star Academy, and completely annihilate their roots of trouble.

Xiao Lan cast a glance at Chu Tianjiao, silently remarking in his heart that this person was a genius. This was undoubtedly the most excellent method.

“Since that’s the case, prepare everyone for the slaughter of the Emperor Star Academy.” Xiao Lan commanded, causing the hearts of those around him to tremble. From now onwards, for both the academies, there was no stopping until death came.

This incident was quickly spread across the entire Royal Capital. Many people were commenting on the madness of Chu Tianjiao’s decision. He actually dared to arrange for the assassination of Qin Wentian.

However, they didn’t know that Qin Wentian’s death was never part of Chu Tianjiao’s plans.

Both the Ye Clan and Ou Clan naturally wouldn’t admit that the deed had been committed by them. The identity of the killer had become a riddle.

However, the citizens of the Royal Academy were also extremely concerned about the life and death of Qin Wentian. Such a dazzling genius, it would truly be a pity if he really died at such a young age.

AGM 175 – A Scroll Of Map

Within the Emperor Star Academy, inside a residence, several Elders crowded together as they looked upon the figure lying down on the bed. Worry and anxiety could be seen reflected in their eyes.

“How is he?” Ren Qianxing hurriedly asked as he saw the Elder sitting next to the bedside turning.

“Strange, strange. His life force is overwhelmingly exuberant, and there’s a powerful energy in his blood. His blood circulated within his heart, providing protection, and he’s recovering now even as we speak,” the Elder said in a low voice, his tone filled with wonder. Such a grievous injury, if it was some other cultivators who suffered from this, they would surely already be dead.

“There’s no danger to his life?” Ren Qianxing asked again.

“None. With his vitality, he only needs time before he fully recovered,” that Elder replied.

After hearing this, the Elders in the room all unclenched their fists, letting out a sigh of relief as the worries melted from their faces.

“Wentian.” Qin Yao’s tears turned into happiness. She sat at the bedside, gently stroking Qin Wentian’s forehead. Her face was tear-streaked; she had almost been frightened to death. The assailant had struck Qin Wentian in his heart.

“Everyone, disperse. Temporarily lock down this news and send men to stand guard here.” Ren Qianxing commanded. In response, the Elders left one by one. Only the Elder who was proficient in healing remained behind. Even now, he was still mumbling in amazement; how could someone at the Arterial Circulation Realm have such a level of vitality? Truly amazing.

Luo Huan walked forward with a brilliant smile etched on her face. “Wentian, Mountain has already passed on, so don’t you dare leave your Senior Sister here alone.”

After saying that, she too turned to leave. The instant she turned, her cheery smile disappeared completely. Replacing the smile was an icy cold expression—the Nine Mystical Palace, the Royal Clan of Chu...This debt of hatred just grew deeper and deeper.

In the blink of an eye, three days passed. During these three days, the conflict between the two academies escalated to an unimaginable extent. As of now, they had already stopped sending formations of Arterial Circulation Cultivators to clash. Instead, Yuanfu cultivators were commanded to directly hunt the students of the opposing academy. Hence, students at the Arterial Circulation Realm all stayed in their respective academy, not daring to go out. Once they stepped out of their zone of protection, only death awaited them.

Both the academies had already completely shred all pretense of cordiality.

Even Chu Tianjiao himself didn't dare to move about rashly. Considering how infuriated the Emperor Star Academy was, there was a high possibility that they may assassinate him.

In these three days, news on the deaths and casualties of both sides unceasingly spread out. The most disastrous battle was when the Emperor Star Academy walked into an ambush laid by the Royal Academy. Luckily, reinforcement arrived in time, and following that battle, a total of four people at the Yuanfu level, and eight people at the Arterial Circulation level had fallen. The tempest of war has truly engulfed the entire Royal Capital.

In the Emperor Star Academy, Qin Wentian was still unconscious. At this moment, there were two extremely beautiful girls sitting by his side.

“Qingcheng, thank you for your efforts these past few days.” Qin Yao had an expression of gratitude on her face as she stared at Mo Qingcheng.

“No worries, this is what I should do. I'm really good at this.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, after which, she continued spoon-feeding Qin Wentian with medicinal soup.

Gazing at Mo Qingcheng's side profile, Qin Yao was slightly stunned before recovering with a smile on her face. “It'd be good if only you could take care of him like this forever.”

“Haha sure, I'd love to.” Mo Qingcheng smiled sweetly, but suddenly, after deciphering the meaning behind Qin Yao's words,

she turned red as she blinked at Qin Yao, “Hmm what I meant was until he awakens.”

“Mmm, that’s what I meant. What do you think I was referring to?” Qin Yao grinned. Mo Qingcheng could only scold herself silently for talking too much.

“Sigh, I don’t know when would he wake up.” Qin Yao’s countenance was painted by worry once more.

“Don’t worry. He will wake up soon.” Mo Qingcheng consoled her. Actually, she also knew of the extent of Qin Wentian’s injuries. No one knew exactly when would he wake up.

“Hmm.” Qin Yao lightly nodded her head. “Qingcheng, I’ll go see if the medicinal soup has been boiled. I’ll bring over a new bowl later.”

After speaking, Qin Yao left. Mo Qingcheng scooped the medicinal soup with a spoon and fed it to Qin Wentian. After which, she gently wiped his lips as she mumbled, “Dumbo, this is already the second time I’m boiling medicinal herbs and feeding you. You have to get well soon, okay?”

Mo Qingcheng propped her chin up with her hands as she stared blankly at Qin Wentian. She had never expected that the fellow she would boil medicine twice for would be Qin Wentian. Maybe, this was fate?

Gazing at that handsome countenance, she thought he looked extremely at peace. She could still remember that the first time she met him, he was still somewhat soft and immature. This year, he had been through a tremendous amount of suffering, and now he had even almost thrown his life away. A real dumbo indeed.

As she lost herself in her musings, Mo Qingcheng somehow unknowingly stretched her hand out and pinched Qin Wentian on his cheek, revealing a mischievous expression. This fellow was not bad looking at all.

It was as though Qin Wentian could feel something. His eyelashes twitched as his eyes slowly opened. After which, he saw a peerless countenance exhibiting an expression akin to panic with her fingers pinching on his face.

Swish! Mo Qingcheng retracted her hands at the speed of lightning. As she saw the bewildered expression on Qin Wentian's face, her face instantly reddened, wishing nothing more for the earth to swallow her whole right now.

"I'm just trying to test to see if you could feel anything. It seems like I'm psychic, since you really woke up." Mo Qingcheng acted like professional actress while smiling widely. However, Qin Wentian didn't say anything, just silently gazing at her, causing the color of her already reddened face to deepen even further.

Looking at the bashful expression on Mo Qingcheng's face, Qin Wentian's heart palpitated wildly. Mo Qingcheng, at this moment, was beyond beautiful. She was gorgeous.

“Come here.” Qin Wentian whispered. Mo Qingcheng’s eyelashes fluttered; she blinked her eye as she lowered her head, moving her face closer to Qin Wentian. Her heart was pounding madly, she had never been this nervous before.

Only to see Qin Wentian reaching out with his hands, pinching her cheeks a couple of times before smiling, “It’s only fair now.”

Mo Qingcheng froze, trembling slightly. She was at a loss, unsure of what to do.

“I’ll go get the medicine.” Mo Qingcheng quickly ran away. Seeing that disappearing silhouette, a radiant smile lit up Qin Wentian’s countenance as he replied, “Thank you.”

Today, Mo Qingcheng seemed to be preoccupied and absent-minded. Looking at her bashful expression, Qin Wentian would occasionally tease her about it. Upon seeing this, Qin Yao was extremely happy; it seemed like that was truly a chance for Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to be together.

In the coming days, Qin Wentian recovered with insane speed. On the fifth day, he could already get up and cultivate. The tempest engulfing the Royal Capital was still unabated, but the violent struggles within seemed to be very far from Qin Wentian.

Mustang, Luo Huan and the rest would occasionally visit Qin Wentian. They refused to tell him news from the outside but rather told him to focus on his cultivation. Not only that, Mustang

repeatedly instructed him not to leave this place until he step into Yuanfu, and that he wasn't allowed to participate in the struggles outside the academy. This caused Qin Wentian to smile bitterly; it was because the Emperor Star Academy feared another similar incident from occurring again and didn't want him to risk himself.

Qin Wentian also didn't want to make things difficult for the academy, so he quietly focused on his cultivation. Finally, a month after the incident, Qin Wentian broke through to the 9th level, stepping into the peak of Arterial Circulation. He was now only a single step away from Yuanfu.

After breaking through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, Qin Wentian spent a few more days consolidating his foundation while also not forgetting to further practice his innate techniques.

Currently, for the Thousand Hands Imprint innate technique, Qin Wentian had already mastered the 4th stance – the Kuji Imprint. His mastery of his other innate techniques, Falling Mountain Palms as well as Berserker Beast Halbert Art, also grew increasingly more complete.

Today, Qin Wentian once again came to the Heavenly Star Pavilion. Upon passing the guardian on the stairway of the 7th level, he dipped into a respectful bow.

Only to see the old man opening his eyes, as a glow could be seen in his previously cloudy eyes. “Are you confident?”

“Let's try.” Qin Wentian spoke. The old man turned his head,

closing his eyes as Qin Wentian walked passed him and stood before the door to the entrance of the 9th level, which has never been opened before.

What exactly was the secret hiding within the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion?

Gushing sounds echoed as the Divine Energy in his body circulated in a frenzy. Stepping forwards, he slammed one of his palms into the door, causing it to shudder violently. Upon seeing this, the guardian's heart trembled as well.

Qin Wentian retreated a step. The Divine Energy within his body continued surging as he struck out once again. This time around, he blasted forwards with both palms, executing both the Falling Mountain Palms and the Kuji Imprint into the door of the entrance.

BOOOM! The resounding echo from the impact caused the structure of the entire Heavenly Star Pavilion to shudder. The students of the academy curiously turned their gazes towards the Pavilion, wondering who was up there.

His ancient halberd appeared in his hands. Despite the boosting effects of a Divine Weapon, the might an Arterial Circulation Cultivator could unleash, still had a limit. Thus, the guardian didn't stop him from using a Divine Weapon to aid him in his quest.

In that instant, Qin Wentian's blood began to boil. Taking a step

forwards, the aura of absolute obedience permeated the air. His whole demeanor turned demonic as the ancient halberd in his hands explosively slashed out.

Pffft! The old guardian's eyes abruptly snapped open as a terrifying resplendent light flickered into existence.

Qin Wentian succeeded. He actually forced that door open!

Qin Wentian was also incomparably excited. Walking forwards, he sought to discover what exactly was the secret that was hidden on the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. However, what caused Qin Wentian to be puzzled was that behind the door, there was only an empty space. This place seemed extremely ordinary, so different from the 7th and 8th level. There was only an incredibly ancient-looking map scroll lying there.

Unrolling the map scroll, a bewildered expression painted his face. This... this was a map.

Was the final secret the Azure Emperor hid in the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion actually just a map?

Qin Wentian had never been out of Chu, so he naturally didn't understand what the map was trying to portray. After keeping it, he walked out, but the old guardian stood in front of him, blocking his path.

"Senior." Qin Wentian respectfully called out.

“From today onwards, the 8th and 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion shall no longer exist. The 7th level will be opened up to the talented genius students of the academy. As for what you have obtained here, you are not to mention it to anyone else” the old guardian instructed.

“Understood.” Qin Wentian nodded. He fully understood the logic behind why it was a calamity for one to possess secrets that one was powerless to protect.

After this, Qin Wentian didn’t immediately leave. Instead, he entered the entrance to the 7th level, heading towards the Spirit Beast Testing Grounds. This time around, he didn’t meet many others, only a plethora of demonic beasts.

Qin Wentian didn’t know that at this moment, there was a huge commotion within the Emperor Star Academy.

Outside the academy, a line of Elders and students stood together in welcome. In the far off horizons, a line of silhouettes mounted demonic beasts as they rode over, while in the air, several figures soared, stopping in the airspace above the Emperor Star Academy. Their gazes were all imperious and sharp, as though they were unequalled in the world.

If Qin Wentian were here, he would discovered that among the newcomers, there was one person whom he knew. This person was none other than Yue Qingfeng, the genius from the Azure Emperor Palace whom he had met before in the Spirit Beast Testing Ground.

The Emperor Star Academy only received news two days ago that people from the Azure Emperor Palace would be paying a visit to them. As to what was the reason for the visit, they were all unclear. They could only bring people together to welcome this 'reinforcement' from this transcendent power that shared the same root.

Not only the Azure Emperor Palace. Today, there were many powerful experts who came to Chu.

In the Royal Palace, Xiao Lan furrowed his brows. He didn't expect the news would be leaked so fast, the news that the Azure Emperor had hidden his greatest secret within the Emperor Star Academy.

If this secret was truly leaked, not to mention a small country like Chu, even the entirety of the Grand Xia Empire would be shakened.

AGM 176 – The Guest Pressuring The Host

Within the Spirit Beast Testing Ground, Qin Wentian had already slaughtered several demonic beasts, devouring their demonic cores. However his eyes at this moment were incomparably clear.

Before Qin Wentian, a gigantic beast of immense stature appeared. This demonic beast was shrouded in a golden light, with a height of 4 metres. Its palms were as big as praying mats and could easily kill a human with a casual swipe.

Golden Primal Ape, from the Golden Primal Ape Constellation of the 5th Heavenly Layer, ranked 3rd in the Warbeast Index. Equipped with flawless speed and defense, it is feared the most for its terrifyingly quick speed.

However, at this moment the golden ape was suffering immensely as it spat out mouthful of fresh blood. The tiny figure in front of him could actually wound him?

The blood within Qin Wentian's body was boiling as his long hair danced in the wind. Wielding the ancient halberd in his hands, it constituted an imposing scene, akin to an ancient god of war, unexcelled in the battlefield.

After breaking through to the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, in addition to the Fiend Transformation Technique, his strength was many times higher when compared to the him who entered here in the past.

Boom! The golden ape stomped on the earth, dashing forwards, causing fissures to appear as the ground cracked. Its gigantic palms swiped towards Qin Wentian, with a pressure even stronger than that of mountains.

Swish~ A pair of illusory Garuda Wings appeared on the back of Qin Wentian. His speed was as fast as lightning, rushing forwards instead of retreating, appearing in front of the ape. With a roar of rage, his body flew upwards as the might of his ancient halberd exploded forth.

RARRRRRRRRRRRRR. The ancient Primal Ape howled in madness. The volume of its roar caused intense pain as the sound waves vibrated within Qin Wentian's eardrums, giving him a splitting headache. With a howl of his own, Qin Wentian blasted forth countless palm strikes, aiming for the mouth of the golden ape, while his ancient halberd slashed forwards and came into contact with a gigantic palm of the golden ape.

The ground trembled and broke apart, giving testament to the ferociousness of the savage battle between man and beast. The surrounding demonic beasts all fled for fear of their lives. After an hour of intense clashes, the golden ape's body was riddled with injuries, but Qin Wentian wasn't feeling too good either. His inner organs trembled violently despite him executing the Garuda Movement Technique, choosing not to clash directly with the Golden Primal Ape.

Puchi~ Chance! Qin Wentian's ancient halberd pierced into the golden ape's eyes as its roar shook the Heavens. The Golden Primal Ape slammed both its palms forward, using the explosive

momentum in a decisive choice to retreat. Qin Wentian started a game of cat and mouse, following close behind and after the time it took for a stick of incense to burn out, the Golden Primal Ape couldn't sustain anymore. It was slaughtered unceremoniously by Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian naturally absorbed the beast spirit with no traces of politeness. He was exceptionally joyful and continued hunting prey in the Spirit Beast Testing Ground. After several moments, he finally met the ranked #5 Crimsonblood Thunder Hawk. Right from the start, Qin Wentian pretended to be injured as he retreated unceasingly upon coming into contact with it. It was only because of that that caused the lightning fast Crimsonblood Thunder Hawk to be lured into the trap. Only after absorbing its beast spirit did he departed from the Testing Grounds.

Now after he absorbed so many beast spirits, the demonic aura his person exuded was getting stronger and stronger, especially when he activated the Fiend Transformation Art.

In the outside world, those from the Emperor Star Academy welcomed the experts from the Azure Emperor Palace, showing them around the academy. However, they didn't know that those from the Azure Emperor Palace was naturally not interested in strolling about. Instead, what they wanted was to understand each and every part of the Emperor Star Academy to see where would be the place with the highest possibility for the Azure Emperor to hide his secret within.

In the vast blue skies, a white crane flew by. Mo Qingcheng came to deliver medicinal herbs for Qin Wentian today. Although Qin

Wentian was gradually recovering and his pallor was already back to normal, she was still worried. After all, his heart was pierced through, it would naturally be for the best if there was external aid like medicinal herbs and pills to nourish his body after his recovery.

“Grandpa.” The white crane descended. Bewilderment shone on her face upon seeing her grandfather accompanying a group of strangers.

She was naturally clear of her grandfather’s position within the Emperor Star Academy. What statuses did these group of guests have that her grandfather was personally showing them around?

“Qingcheng, quick, come and greet these elders from the Azure Emperor Palace.” Old Gu smiled, reminding her with his words in case Mo Qingcheng said something inappropriate.

“Azure Emperor Palace?” Mo Qingcheng’s heart trembled slightly. She heard of this name before; wasn’t it one of the transcendent powers of the nine states?

“Mo Qingcheng of the junior generation pays her respects to the elders.” Mo Qingcheng bowed. Those from the Azure Emperor Palace contemplated Mo Qingcheng, especially several of the younger cultivators. Their gazes were heated up by passion, sweeping across Mo Qingcheng’s body. To think that there was a beauty of this level in a such small country like Chu; even in their Azure State Capital, there were almost no females that was

comparable to her in looks.

“What a beautiful child, is she already betrothed to someone?” A middle-aged man from the Azure Emperor Palace smiled.

“Qingcheng is not yet 18, she’s not betrothed to anyone,” Old Gu politely replied.

“Haha, it’s almost time to talk about matters of marriage engagement and betrothal isn’t it? Mo Qingcheng, what’s the level of your cultivation?” the middle-aged man asked.

“1st level of Yuanfu.” Mo Qingcheng wasn’t feeling too happy in her heart, but she still had to reply.

The eyes of the middle aged man brightened. Not even 18 years of age, yet already stepped into Yuanfu. In addition to the beauty of hers, she was really remarkable. Thinking of here, he cast a glance at Yue Qingfeng who stood by his side.

Yue Qingfeng naturally understood his father’s intentions. His heart was also moved upon seeing the beautiful countenance of Mo Qingcheng.

“Miss Mo, my name is Yue Qingfeng.”

Only to see Yue Qingcheng smiling at her, exuding elegance and politeness. Such a scene caused the hearts of many in the Emperor Star Academy to freeze. Old Gu had wanted to push Mo Qingcheng

and Qin Wentian together. But now, even those who were blind could see the intentions of Yue Qingfeng.

In Chu, although there were many who were secretly in love with Mo Qingcheng, with the status and background of Mo Qingcheng, if she was unwilling, no one would dare to open their mouths and raise the subject.

However, it was different for Yue Qingfeng. He was from a transcendent power, originating from the Azure Emperor Palace.

Mo Qingcheng nodded to Yue Qingfeng and didn't reply, silently scolding herself that she came at the wrong time.

"Hahaha, both of you of the junior generation should communicate more. It must be boring accompanying us these old folks." Yue Qingfeng's father laughed. Taking the hint, Yue Qingfeng stepped forwards, smiling at Mo Qingcheng. "Miss Mo, shall we go for a walk?"

Mo Qingcheng was naturally unwilling in her heart. She didn't reply.

"Qingcheng." At this moment, a silhouette walked over. Mo Qingcheng turned her head, as a gentle smile blossomed on her face. The newcomer was none other than Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian had already noticed the happenings over here earlier. He had already met Yue Qingfeng in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds and knew that he was from the Azure Emperor Palace. Seeing how he obviously had the intentions to court Mo

Qingcheng, Qin Wentian felt extremely uncomfortable in his heart.

Such a feeling, Qin Wentian had never experienced it before.

“What are you doing here?” Qin Wentian walked to the side of Mo Qingcheng as he extended his hands and pulled the dainty hand of Mo Qingcheng along. Mo Qingcheng trembled a little as an expression of shyness flashed in her eyes. She naturally understood what Qin Wentian was planning to do. Going along with his plans, she gently smiled and replied, “I’m here to deliver the medicine for you.”

Seeing this scene occurring, those from the Emperor Star Academy grew increasingly worried. To think that the relationship between Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng had gotten closer to such an extent, they wondered whether those from the Azure Emperor Palace would take offence at this.

Yue Qingfeng’s eyes narrowed; he naturally recognised Qin Wentian.

“Wentian, quick come and pay your respects to the elders of the Azure Emperor Palace.” Old Gu called out. Qin Wentian nodded as he bowed, “Qin Wentian of the junior generation pays his respect to the elders.”

The middle-aged cast a glance at Qin Wentian, as his eyes gleamed with a sharp light.

“Let’s go.” The middle aged man immediately led the group away, walking past Qin Wentian, disregarding his existence. Earlier, he played matchmaker for Yue Qingfeng and Mo Qingcheng, but in the blink of an eye, an insignificant insect from the junior generation came by and spoiled his mood. His face was completely thrown away.

Qin Wentian, the champion of a mere Jun Lin Banquet, how could he possibly put him in his eyes?

“Brother Qin, nice to see you again.” Yue Qingfeng walked to the side of Qin Wentian, offering his greetings while simultaneously sweeping his gaze impolitely over Mo Qingcheng’s figure before leaving. Qin Wentian furrowed his brows as a cold light flickered in his eyes.

After those from the Azure Emperor Palace left, seeing that Qin Wentian was still holding on to her hand, Mo Qingcheng rolled her eyes at Qin Wentian and whispered, “Hey, you are still not letting go?”

Feeling the soft touch of Mo Qingcheng’s hands, Qin Wentian was really unwilling to indeed. Smiling, he pinched her palms gently, causing Mo Qingcheng to blush before he finally let go.

“Lecherous fellow.” Mo Qingcheng scolded in a low voice, then she quickly walked forwards. However, a shallow smile could be seen reflected on her face. The smile also contained traces of shyness, just like a young girl experiencing her first awakening of love.

“I couldn’t help it.” An awkward smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s face as he rubbed his head. Catching up to Mo Qingcheng, he noticed that the beautiful face of hers was intentionally arranged in a frown, with traces of mischievousness mixed in it. Qin Wentian involuntarily became an imbecile as he stared at her, warmth blossoming in his heart.

This was the first time he experienced such an emotion. It felt extremely wondrous, a slight bit of nervousness mixed in with a little warmth. It was truly marvelous.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace arrived at a great hall. Yue Qingfeng’s father sat in the seat of the host while the others of his group stood by his side.

Those from the Emperor Star Academy were helpless. In actuality, they had contacted the Azure Emperor Palace before. Back then, the incident of Luo Tianya was precisely resolved with the help of the Emperor Azure Palace. However, the Emperor Azure Palace was also split into factions, namely the Azure Faction as well as the Fei Faction. Currently, the power of the Azure Faction was growing weaker and weaker, and they gradually lost their authority within the Azure Emperor Palace. This time round, those who came to the Emperor Star Academy were all from the Fei Faction.

Yue Hanshan sat in the master seat, sweeping his sharp gaze over at those from the Emperor Star Academy. “From today onwards, my Azure Emperor Palace will directly take control of the Heavenly Star Pavilion and Astral River Hall of the Emperor Star Academy.

Qingfeng, accompany me to the Dreamsky Forest later.”

The faces of those from the Emperor Star Academy froze, as their countenances become extremely unsightly to behold.

“Why? Is there a problem?” Yue Hanshan coldly asked as he noticed the frowning faces of those from the Emperor Star Academy.

“There are no problems, I only hope that the Azure Emperor Palace wouldn’t disrupt the cultivation of our students.” Old Gu lamented in his heart; they couldn’t afford to offend the powerful Azure Emperor Palace.

“Good. In addition, send out some of your elders to bring my people to the other secret places of the Emperor Star Academy,” Yue Hanshan spoke again. Those from the Emperor Star Academy could only agree unwillingly.

It was as though these people were looking for something.

“Move out.” Yue Hanshan waved his hands, and the others left. Very quickly, only him and his son Yue Qingfeng remained in the great hall.

“Father, is the secret of the Azure Emperor really hidden here?” Yue Qingfeng asked.

Only to see Yue Hanshan frowning. He closed his eyes, replying

in a low voice. “Those from the Azure Faction found some notes of the Azure Emperor. Back then, he stopped in Chu several times. There is a very great probability that the secret was hidden here. Qingfeng, if we really discovered the secret, your future would be incomparably glorious.”

Yue Qingfeng’s heart trembled upon imagining it. Back then, the secret as to why the Azure Emperor was ranked first among the 36 starlords, and why his combat prowess was so terrifying—able to stand alone against unending tides of enemies of the same cultivation as him, defeating them with absurd ease—was finally discovered.

The Azure Emperor, did not only have a single Yuanfu.

When the arterial pathways of Stellar Martial Cultivators transformed into a spiral, forming their Yuan Reservoir, there would only be a single Yuanfu (Yuan Palace) within their bodies. This was an unshakable, ironclad law of cultivation.

However the Azure Emperor broke this ironclad law; somehow, he managed to open up several Yuanfu within his body. To Stellar Martial Cultivators, the meaning of having several Yuanfu was extremely clear. This indicated that his body could store several times the amount of Astral Energy others could store, while also giving him the ability to nourish different Astral Novas in his different Yuanfus. How could his combat prowess not be astounding?

AGM 177 – Outrage

There were numerous powerhouses that came to Chu, however, they weren't here for the struggle between the Emperor Star Academy and the Royal Academy. This was something inconsequential to them, and hardly worthy of their interest.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace had caused a commotion so great that not even the dogs and chickens were left undisturbed. Although they promised the Emperor Star Academy that they wouldn't involve the students, they weren't the least bit polite in the execution of their search. The innate techniques kept within the Heavenly Star Pavilion were all upended and in disarray. The Azure Emperor Palace had also discovered the 7th level and the entrance to the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. As for the entrance to the 8th and 9th levels, the interior space within had all been destroyed. These levels only contained ordinary innate techniques, without anything of import.

However, the Emperor Star Academy was infuriated to see that whenever those from the Azure Emperor Palace came across a powerful innate technique, they would shamelessly seize it for themselves.

And what was even more outrageous was that they even wanted to tear down the Emperor Star Monuments, the stone tablets the academy stood for. These very monuments symbolised the academy's history.

At that moment, many students gathered in front of the monuments. Ren Qianxing, Old Gu and many of the elders were

there as well, even the old guardian from the Heavenly Star Pavilion's 7th Level had arrived.

The Azure Emperor Palace group approached the tablets, only for the old guardian to call out, "This place is the lifeblood of the Azure Emperor, and the place that records the history of our Emperor Star Academy. Please be lenient and show some mercy."

"You must be the current headmaster of the Emperor Star Academy, descendent of the Azure Emperor, the one named Diyi. Am I right?" Yue Hanshan swept a glance at the old guardian, a sharp light flickering in his eyes.

"Indeed," the old man spoke calmly, causing the majority of those from the academy to freeze in shock. This seemingly ordinary, inconspicuous aged guardian was actually the current headmaster of the Emperor Star Academy.

Were all the previous headmasters of the Academy all descended from the bloodline of the Azure Emperor? Had they always been silently protecting the Academy from the shadows?

"Diyi. You should already be aware about the purpose of my visit, and understand that we have no choice but to destroy the Emperor Star Monuments." The gaze of Yue Hanshan was serene, yet an unquestionable steel-like expression gleamed in them.

"How ruthless." The students of the Academy were all outraged but even so, they didn't dare to say a word.

“The Azure Emperor Palace share the same roots as the Emperor Star Academy, how can you be this overbearing?” From afar, Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian stood together. Mo Qingcheng’s brows were knitted in displeasure. She was truly and exceedingly furious at the Palace’s oppressive nature.

“Miss Mo, the Emperor Star Academy holds no sway over the decisions of the Azure Emperor Palace. After all, both parties are not on the same level.” Yue Qingfeng gazed at Mo Qingcheng, as a warm and gentle smile appeared on his face. Each time he saw her, he felt a stirring in his heart.

Seeing the besotted expression on Yue Qingfeng’s face, Mo Qingcheng could only clench her fist tightly. It was obvious the Azure Emperor Palace was prepared to shred all forms of cordiality.

“What does Miss Mo think about accompanying me to stay at the Palace together? After all, this place is too small. Your talent would only blossom when matched with a place such as ours,” Yue Qingfeng seemingly joked, yet it was glaringly obvious to all the meaning his words hinted at. He was taking liberties with Mo Qingcheng.

“You are too impudent.” Embers of anger sparked in Qin Wentian’s eyes, only to see Yue Qingfeng shift his gaze over with coldness. Staring at Qin Wentian, he laughed coldly, “Does Brother Qin still think that we are within the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds?”

Even before the sound of his voice faded, he transformed into a

blur of shadows as a terrifying pressure gushed out towards Qin Wentian. Striking out without warning, and within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, it obviously indicated his disdain and contempt for this place.

Naturally, Yue Qingfeng believed that his strength would be able to suppress Qin Wentian. After all, they were already clear about each other's strength level back when they allied together in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds.

The strength of Yue Qingfeng's palm strike was unfathomably ferocious, and gave the impression of being able to conquer everything in its path.

Qin Wentian froze into place as he executed the Falling Mountain Palms. As the two palm attacks collided, a booming sound rang out, and the crowd witnessed Qin Wentian's body forced back into retreat from the impact. Blood seeped out of the corners of his mouth and a sense of worry filled the hearts of the crowd. Yue Qingfeng was tyrannical indeed, to think that he was able to injure Qin Wentian in a single exchange of blows.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace merely looked on with disinterest, as though this outcome was only to be expected. After all, the aura Qin Wentian emitted was only at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation. Based on the power of Yue Qingfeng, if he wanted to kill Qin Wentian, he could do so with the same ease as flipping his palms.

However, Mo Qingcheng's beautiful eyes gleamed as she glanced at Qin Wentian. This fellow was finally getting smarter.

Naturally, she knew that Qin Wentian had already stepped into the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. He intentionally suppressed his own cultivation base in that earlier exchange of blows. If not for this, she didn't believe Yue Qingfeng could defeat Qin Wentian in combat.

"Tear it down." At that moment, Yue Qingfeng commanded in a cold voice. Those from the Azure Emperor Palace jointly sent out palm attacks, and amidst a deafening explosion the Emperor Star Monuments shattered, the fragments from the destroyed tablets blasting out in all directions.

"No...." Luo Huan witnessed the stone tablet of Mountain destroyed with the rest. Her eyes reddened as a surge of murderous intent passed through her. She was truly infuriated.

Those from the Palace began searching through the fragments but found nothing hidden within. Snorting with disdain, they flicked their sleeves and departed.

"Qingcheng, if you're free, let's go out together." Before leaving, Yue Qingfeng smiled at Mo Qingcheng. Seeing that beautiful countenance, his heart stirred with feeling. Even if he couldn't get her to be his wife, as long as he could get her body, wouldn't that be just as exciting?

At the thought of this, the blood in his body surged. Sweeping his eyes over Mo Qingcheng's figure, his smile gradually widened.

Mo Qingcheng could only bite hard on her lips until her blood flowed, suffering the humiliation in silence. How could she not understand what the smile on Yue Qingfeng's face foreshadowed.

Luo Huan walked forwards, kneeling amongst fragments of the now destroyed Emperor Star Monuments. She appeared absent-minded, as though devoid of all spirit. Her countenance was clearly paler by several shades, her heart sunk with a heavy sense of loss.

Those from the Academy could only stand in silence, tolerating the humiliation and anger in their hearts. Yet, nobody dared to speak out.

Qin Wentian witnessed all of these happenings. Booming sounds rang out as he clenched his hands into fists. A terrifying coldness could be seen within his eyes as he looked at Yu Qingfeng's departing back. That, was truly killing intent.

Qin Wentian reached out and caught hold of Mo Qingcheng dainty hands, and her body tensed up in response. After she recovered, as she turned her gaze towards Qin Wentian, a sweet smile blossomed on her face causing Qin Wentian's state of mind to ripple involuntarily.

"Let's leave." Qin Wentian held on to Mo Qingcheng's hand as they departed the area.

.....

Within the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds, Qin Wentian once again began his slaughter of the demonic beasts. Even those beasts

ranked within the top 10 weren't able to withstand his strength.

At the peak of a mountain, Qin Wentian halted his steps and cast his gaze forwards, surveying the majestic mountain range before him.

An extremely bizarre looking demonic beast was located over there. The demonic beast had the head of a dragon, the body of a lion, the wings of a garuda, the scales of a Xuanwu, the tail of a python and the claws of a Kirin. It's demeanor appeared to be incomparably malevolent.

"Demon Sovereign," Qin Wentian breathed. It was ranked #1 in the Warbeast Index. In the index, there was only a description of its appearance but held no records of its abilities.

Qin Wentian recognised the beast at a single glance. This was a Demon Sovereign.

A cold, sinister light gleamed from the depths of the Demon Sovereign. The fearsome light erupted from its body, and its sinister eyes gave the impression that it could capture souls, seemingly hinting at the possibility that this demonic beast possessed the ability to influence the mental state of others.

With the ancient halberd in his hands, Qin Wentian transformed into a blurred shadow as he dashed forwards to the Demon Sovereign. His purpose of entering the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds was none other than to hunt the top ranking beasts recorded in the Warbeast Index. And since fate had now arranged a

meeting with the #1 demonic beast, how could he not seize this golden opportunity dangling right in front of him?

A burst of eye-piercing Astral Light inundated the area and with a tremble, the void shook as space was torn apart. Beside the Demon Sovereign, several other demonic beasts appeared. Together, their howls of rage created a harsh and discordant cacophony, striking fear in the hearts of those who heard it.

Qin Wentian froze, as an expression of shock flashed in his eyes.

“It’s a Summoning-type Demonic Beast. The #1 ranked demonic beast of the Warbeast Index, the Demon Sovereign, was actually a Summoning-type Beast.” Qin Wentian’s heart pounded with excitement. Wasn’t this a beast spirit that anyone would yearn for, even in his dreams? However, he quickly returned to his senses as he noticed several demonic beasts dashing towards him.

Swish~ A raging gust of wind billowed past. Qin Wentian moved so fast it was as though he had transformed into a real Garuda. With the ancient halberd in his hands, he smashed out with the Azure Dragon Stance of the Berserker Beasts Halbard Art, demolishing a demonic beast in front of him. Qin Wentian didn’t pause in his motions, following up his earlier attack with the Vermilion Bird Stance, sweeping the ancient halberd out in a horizontal arc amidst the roars and howls of the demonic beasts.

Two days later, the exhausted spirit body of Qin Wentian exited the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. He felt extremely uncomfortable; his spiritual consciousness was riddled with injuries and was on the brink of dissipating by the time he defeated

the Demon Sovereign. Covered with wounds, and using each and every bit of his skills and innate techniques, he narrowly overcame the Demon Sovereign and absorbed its beast spirit. Despite his exhaustion, Qin Wentian felt exceptionally excited to gain such a reward.

“Wentian.”

As Qin Wentian walked back to his residence at the Emperor Star Academy, a voice abruptly called out. Qin Wentian turned back only to see Mo Qingcheng approaching him. Her initially icy cold face broke out into a smile as she looked at him. However, Yue Qingfeng was also following her from a distance.

For the past two days, Mo Qingcheng could only tolerate his harassment.

Qin Wentian stood at her side, whispering, “Does he keep doing that?”

“Mmhm.” Mo Qingcheng nodded with an expression of unhappiness on her face.

“Let’s go for a walk.” Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng along with a smile. Mo Qingcheng agreed and they ran off in the direction of the Academy’s exit.

Those in the academy couldn’t help but feel slightly jealous upon seeing the closeness between Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian. But

despite this, they had to concede that the two of them made a great couple, and hoped that they would have a beautiful future together.

Yue Qingfeng's eyes narrowed, flashing with a cold light, as he watched Qin Wentian pulling Mo Qingcheng along.

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace were growing more and more insolent. Despite turning the entire academy topsy turvy, they were still unable to find what they were looking for.

Yue Qingfeng felt somewhat bored and decided to walk about the Emperor Star Academy with some youths from the Azure Emperor Palace. However today, a group of blind fools actually dared to antagonise them, which led to a clash erupting between both parties. In addition, those from the academy had Yuanfu cultivators with them, which easily suppressed the group of Arterial Circulation cultivators from the Palace. How could these prideful young cultivators take this lying down?

They were from a transcendent power, to think that there would actually be people that dared to antagonise them, especially from a small place like Chu. They were truly courting death.

In the midst of the escalating conflict, those from the Azure Emperor Palace intercepted their opponents and asked Yue Qingfeng to return for more reinforcements. At the first opportunity, Yue Qingfeng immediately departed the area, but just as he passed by a remote-looking area, a figure clad in black appeared, blocking his path.

The black-clad figure lowered his head, advancing with a long spear in his hands.

“Who are you?” Yue Qingfeng halted his steps as he inquired coldly. He had never imagined that someone would actually attempt to murder him in broad daylight.

Yue Qingfeng wasn’t an idiot, he could faintly sense that this person had a bone to pick with him.

“The one that will take your life,” a cold voice echoed in the air. The figure transformed into a blurred shadow as filaments of spear light erupted forth. A monstrous demonic qi permeated the air, the long spear trembling as fearsome spirals began to form at the tip of the spear head. Each spiral seemed to contain boundless energy within them.

Yue Qingfeng inclined his head as he stared at the silhouette dashing towards him. Upon meeting the eyes of his attacker, his heart involuntarily trembled with violence.

“It’s you?” Yue Qingfeng raised his arms to attack, his mighty palms directly colliding with the long spear. A piercing sound echoed out, as the long spear ran through his palms with absurd ease and immediately penetrated his throat, pinning Yue Qingfeng to the ground.

“9th level of Arterial Circulation.” Yue Qingfeng’s eyes widened in shock as he died with one remaining regret. Not even in his

wildest dreams could he have imagined that he would die in such a small place like Chu.

AGM 178 – Travelling Together

Within the grounds of the Emperor Star Academy, lay the corpse of Yue Qingfeng. The cause of his death was a long spear penetrating his throat, pinning and locking his body to the ground.

In front of his corpse, Yue Hanshan shuddered violently; he would never have believed, and was still unwilling to believe, that this trip to Chu would lead to the murder of his son, Yue Qingfeng.

His eyes reddened, and a towering aura of killing intent could be felt gushing forth from him. All those from the Emperor Star Academy fled upon witnessing this scene, their hearts involuntarily rejoicing in the face of Yue Hanshan's misfortune. After all, those from the Azure Emperor Palace were insufferably arrogant, as they ravaged through the entire Emperor Star Academy, turning everything upside down. This loss could be considered a punishment for them.

Surely, the reason behind Yue Qingfeng's death must be because he had offended someone. He had sowed seeds of vengeance everywhere, ultimately leading to his death.

“Investigate, INVESTIGATE EVERYTHING COMPLETELY!” Yue Hanshan howled in anger, his infuriated voice resounding throughout the Emperor Star Academy.

....

At that moment, Qin Wentian was sitting in the courtyard of his

own residence with a map scroll in his hands. Upon hearing the howl of rage, Qin Wentian inclined his head, directing his gaze towards the commotion with an unperturbed expression.

If he didn't kill Yue Qingfeng, Mo Qingcheng would never be at ease in her heart. So, Yue Qingfeng must die.

That once childish young man had undergone too many baptisms under the cruelty of reality, to the point where his heart grew colder and colder. He had no qualms about transforming into a god of blood and slaughter, if a threat were made to the people around him.

Lowering his head, he turned his attention back to the map in his hands. Looking closely at it, Qin Wentian traced his finger to a random location on the map. Over it, there were traces of words inscribed.

“This place is the Demon Continent of the Grand Xia Empire. According to the map, the X marked there should be referring to a forested mountain range within it.” Qin Wentian stared at the terrain; the continent's size was just too vast, with forests and mountain ranges even more expansive compared to some other countries outlined in the map. One such country was the Dark Forest of Chu, a forested region so vast that it even enveloped the entire Royal Capital of Chu within it. It didn't seem possible that anyone could determine for certain the secrets hidden within.

(Change of translation terms: State -> Continent e.g. Transcendent powers of the nine states -> Transcendent powers of the nine continents)

The X-mark on the map, referred to an extremely huge region made up of an immense forested mountain range.

Qin Wentian studied that part of the map, noting that the X-mark was pointing to a random location within a small city. The map was so clear to the point where the X-mark referred to very specific locations within the city. He wondered what secret the Azure Emperor had hidden there.

“Wentian.” At this moment, a voice drifted over. Qin Wentian turned his head towards the voice and saw Old Gu and Mo Qingcheng descending from the air.

“Old Gu, Qingcheng.” Qin Wentian kept the map as he stood up in greeting.

“Yue Qingfeng died,” Old Gu stated, staring intently at Qin Wentian. Upon seeing the unperturbed expression on Qin Wentian’s face, he sighed silently in relief as he shifted topics. “We’ve also finally discovered the reason behind the Azure Emperor Palace’s visit.”

Naturally, the Emperor Star Academy wouldn’t spend too much effort into investigating the culprit behind Yue Qingfeng’s death.

“Why were they here?” Qin Wentian asked as his eyes flickered with curiosity.

“There are two great Factions within the Azure Emperor Palace. One of them – named the Azure Faction, were the direct descendants that share the same bloodline as the Azure Emperor. The Azure Faction and the Emperor Star Academy were linked in countless ways. Our current Headmaster Diyi is the representative from the Azure Faction, and those that came here to Chu are from the other Faction. From the side of the Azure Faction we received news that of a high probability the past Azure Emperor had hidden his life’s greatest secret within the Emperor Star Academy. Xiao Lan of the Nine Mystical Palace came here because of this news, as well.”

“The greatest secret of the Azure Emperor?” Qin Wentian’s eyes shone.

“Yes, his greatest secret. In the past, the Azure Emperor was unmatched and peerless, regardless of whichever cultivation realm he was in. Easily obtaining victory, even when facing multiple opponents at the same level, he was said to be an invincible existence. The reason for this was because the Azure Emperor had broken the ironclad law of cultivation – he had more than one Yuanfu. After the secret was exposed, countless powerful experts from the Grand Xia Empire banded together to chase after the Azure Emperor for the sake of obtaining the secret. It was highly possible that before he disappeared, he came to Chu and founded the Emperor Star Academy.”

“More than one Yuanfu?” Qin Wentian exclaimed in shock. According to what he knew, everyone could only cultivate a single Yuan Ocean within their bodies, this was an indisputable fact. After which, the Yuan Ocean would also be used to nurture their Astral Soul until their Astral Nova manifested.

“You are right, but there may be a heaven-defying innate technique to break that ironclad law. It’s just that no one knew of the existence of it,” Old Gu continued, as Qin Wentian’s heart suddenly trembled as he thought of something.

Map. That map from the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

But if that map could really show the hiding place of the Azure Emperor’s secret, shouldn’t Headmaster Diyi be able to deduce it?

In these few thousand years, no one had stormed the door guarding the entrance of the 9th level. Was this the absolute order given by the Azure Emperor before his death?

“However, you need bother yourself no longer with this matter. In any case, Qingcheng wishes to go out for a walk, why don’t you accompany her?” Old Gu sighed.

Qin Wentian glanced at Old Gu before shifting his eyes to Mo Qingcheng. How could he not understand Old Gu’s intentions?

Those from the Azure Emperor Palace thought his strength was merely at the 8th level of Arterial Circulation, and had even witnessed how Yue Qingfeng had injured him. Naturally, they would not suspect him. However, both Old Gu and Mo Qingcheng should have already guessed that he was the one who killed Yue Qingfeng. There was no absolute guarantee that his strength would remain hidden and thus they wished for him to leave temporarily, staying out of the line of sight of those from the Azure

Emperor Palace.

And, when talking about leaving, it was about temporarily leaving Chu. Currently, Chu was embroiled in the chaotic struggles between the rebels and the Royal Clan, as well as the feud between both academies. In addition to that, both parties from the Nine Mystical Palace and Azure Emperor Palace had also arrived. In these troubled times, the academy wished for him to be far away from the conflict.

This was the only way so that Qin Wentian wouldn't be in danger.

After several moments, Qin Wentian nodded his head heavily as he replied, "Okay."

"Make your preparations, and leave immediately as soon as you're done." Old Gu patted Qin Wentian on his shoulders as he departed.

"Let me first say goodbye to my Father and Sister," Qin Wentian said to Mo Qingcheng.

"I'll wait for you here." Mo Qingcheng nodded.

Qin Wentian bid farewell to his family and close friends, instructing those who wished to leave that they must only do so under the protection of the Emperor Star Academy. After which, he met up once more with Mo Qingcheng, and together they

sneaked quietly out of the academy, before flying away on Mo Qingcheng's white crane.

The white crane flew westwards. Qin Wentian stood on top of it, casting his gaze at the gradually disappearing Royal Capital. In his eyes, there were traces of attachment and also of reluctance.

Qin Wentian agreed to Old Gu's suggestions because he clearly knew that in the current situation, he didn't even have the strength and qualification to battle. Thus, he chose to leave Chu for the time-being.

"I will be back soon. Very soon," Qin Wentian vowed in his heart. There were already too many people in the Royal Capital that he couldn't bear to part with.

He was truly reluctant to leave, but he needed to strengthen his power.

"What are you thinking about?" Mo Qingcheng asked in a low voice, standing at Qin Wentian's side.

"Qingcheng, thank you. We should part ways now, and you should return to the academy. I may need to journey somewhere extremely far away." Qin Wentian glanced at Mo Qingcheng, a gentle smile adorning his lips.

"But we agreed that you must accompany me for a walk." Mo Qingcheng pouted as she gazed at Qin Wentian with a hint of

rebuke in her eyes.

Qin Wentian could only smile bitterly. As he placed his hands on Mo Qingcheng's shoulders he spoke with seriousness, "I really need to go to a faraway place, and it may be exceedingly dangerous. I don't want you to be at risk because of me."

Mo Qingcheng quietly gazed at Qin Wentian, not speaking a word. Her peerless, unmatched countenance of beauty, was so close to him. Her limpid eyes akin to Autumn water held traces of heartfelt worry in them, causing warm currents to fill Qin Wentian's heart.

Reaching out with his hands, his fingers moved towards Mo Qingcheng's visage. His heart was pounding madly; he had never been this nervous in his life before.

Finally, Qin Wentian's fingers touched her face, her smooth and gentle skin sent shivers down Qin Wentian spine, causing his heart to palpitate even wilder. He looked intently at Mo Qingcheng, as though afraid he had angered her.

"I'll go with you." Mo Qingcheng whispered, gazing back at him.

Qin Wentian smiled reluctantly, seeing the resolute expression in the eyes of Mo Qingcheng. The look was mixed with hidden bitterness, as though she was daring him to disagree, and so he could only nod his head in acquiescence.

“That’s better.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, causing Qin Wentian’s heartbeat to quicken. This was the first time he’d seen her smiling at such close proximity. She was too stunning, too breathtaking.

“Have you not taken enough advantage yet?” Pouting, Mo Qingcheng glared at Qin Wentian. Stunned into realization, only now did Qin Wentian remove his trembling hands, as he sat back on the white crane, feeling a sweetness in his heart. Only with Mo Qingcheng would he experience these emotions that seemed a mixture of warmth and sweetness.

Mo Qingcheng sat down beside Qin Wentian, as the white crane increased its speed further. A fiendishly handsome young man sitting together with a celestial beauty, drifting through the clouds like a pair of immortals.

“Where are we going? Mo Qingcheng asked with a gentle smile on her face.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map, studying the X-mark before replying, “The Demon Continent, we will fly according to the path outlined on the map. I’m afraid we will still need a great deal of time before we arrive.”

“Where did you get this map from?” Mo Qingcheng inquired, as puzzlement painted her face.

“9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion. This was left behind by the Azure Emperor, Dicang. When your grandpa told us the secret

of the Azure Emperor, I guessed that it had an extremely high probability of being hidden in the location marked on the map.” Qin Wentian pointed to the X-mark.

Mo Qingcheng trembled slightly as her expressions blanked, stunned by the trust Qin Wentian placed in her. Without reservation, Qin Wentian had actually told her the location of the Azure Emperor’s secret.

As she thought of this, sweetness blossomed in her heart, and she smiled and nodded. She was extremely happy that Qin Wentian trusted her so much.

Gentle gusts of wind blew upon their bodies as Qin Wentian held the map. The white crane continued flying westwards, across mountains, rivers, towns and villages.

This place was the furthest Qin Wentian had been to, ever since he could form memories. Similarly, it was the same for Mo Qingcheng. She had never been so far away from Chu before.

Their hearts were filled with apprehension, but despite this, there was also warmth. This was because their travelling companion was none other than each other.

Within both their hearts, for the first time in their lives, the seeds of love began to germinate.

AGM 179 – Fairy Qingmei

A few thousand li away from the outskirts of the Demon Capital, there was a vast forested region so huge that it seemed without boundaries, stretching across an inexhaustible expanse.

At dawn, atop this massive wilderness, there appeared a white crane.

Mounted on top of the crane, there was a fiendishly handsome young man as well as an extremely beautiful, pure-looking girl. The girl's head rested gently against his shoulders, leaning her body lightly upon his.

The young man gradually opened his eyes, but remained motionless, afraid that his movements would disturb the girl.

These two were none other than Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng's eyelashes fluttered, as she slowly woke up. Her eyes were like crystals, sparkling with a pure glow and then flickered, her countenance reddening as she moved her head slowly away from him.

“You woke.” Qin Wentian gazed at the somewhat tired face of Mo Qingcheng, and a faint feeling of heartbreak flashed in his heart. On their journey to this place, they had gotten lost, taken many detours, and spent almost a month on the back of the white crane. Although the white crane's flying speed was several times faster

than theirs, it still had its limits as it was merely a 7th-level Demonic Beast after all.

“Mm...” Mo Qingcheng nodded lightly. A glow of fascination shone in her eyes, the mountain range was so vast that they couldn’t see its end. In comparison, the Dark Forest would at most only fill up a corner of this region.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map and studied it, after which he smiled to Mo Qingcheng. “We will arrive soon, help me guide the crane’s flying direction.”

“Okay.” Mo Qingcheng nodded in agreement as the white crane continued flying forwards. Despite knowing they were close, half a day passed and they still had yet to discover the location marked on the map.

“Maybe we are flying in the wrong direction.” Mo Qingcheng furrowed her brows lightly. In this huge expanse of land, there was a high probability they were flying off course by several degrees.

“I see people over there.” Qin Wentian pointed as he stared ahead at a group of cultivators, all of them mounted on flying demonic beasts.

The cultivators also noticed the white crane, and gradually flew closer, gradually nearing it. As they took a better look at the two of them, their eyes couldn’t help but sparkle. A young man with devastating good looks and a breathtakingly stunning young woman, they couldn’t help but stare for several moments at the

couple.

“Are you all heading to the Demon Mountain City?” Someone within the group directed the question to both of them.

“So there really is a Demon Mountain City,” Qin Wentian quietly mused as he stared at the map in his hands.

“Yes, how far are we from there?” Qin Wentian replied.

“You guys are already quite close to it already,” said a young man within the group as he stared at Mo Qingcheng. Her beauty far surpassed that of his other female travelling companions.

“We need to rush.” said the female cultivator beside him, furrowing her brows in displeasure. The female was tall and extremely beautiful, and elegantly wore a blue dress. However when compared to Mo Qingcheng, her radiance dimmed and could only serve as a backdrop to further enhance Mo Qingcheng’s beauty. Hence, seeing the expression in the eyes of her male travelling companions she was naturally unhappy.

“Fine.” A few of the males were more obedient, steering their mounts away from the white crane. Despite doing so, there was still some lingering attachment in the eyes of the young man from earlier.

Qin Wentian smiled wryly as he glanced at Mo Qingcheng. As the saying went, ‘femme fatale’ – women who are too beautiful would

naturally attract the attention of others. He still didn't know whether it was the right decision to bring her along.

“Are you unhappy?” Mo Qingcheng whispered, noticing his expression.

“I didn't like the way they kept looking at you.” Qin Wentian shrugged and smiled. “But oh well, their eyes belong to them, I can only try to adapt.”

“Are you jealous?” Mo Qingcheng's dazzling eyes twinkled. Qin Wentian said nothing, and she took his silence as acceptance, causing a feeling of sweetness to blossom in her heart.

“Did you bring a change of clothes?” Mo Qingcheng abruptly asked.

“Yeah.” Qin Wentian nodded his head.

“Show me your other set of clothes.” Mo Qingcheng smiled, and while he didn't understand her intent, Qin Wentian still took out the other clothes he prepared for the trip. As he stared dumbfoundedly, Mo Qingcheng wrapped a piece of his clothing around her body, covering her gracefully exquisite figure. Tearing a strip of fabric off yet another set of clothing, she tied up her long hair and wrapped a strip as a bandana around her head. The overall look, appeared somewhat incongruous, yet with also a hint of masculinity.

“How do I look?” Mo Qingcheng spread her hands as she asked.

Qin Wentian contemplated her appearance; her bearing may have resembled the male form, but there was still no way to mask her jade-white skin and beautiful countenance. But in spite of this, her current oddly attired figure wasn't as attention-drawing as before.

Humans would always love to make themselves look good, so the fact that Mo Qingcheng would choose to dress herself in this way moved Qin Wentian's heart. Reaching out, he held onto the dainty hands of Mo Qingcheng.

Mo Qingcheng and Qin Wentian finally saw the Demon Mountain City as outlined in the map. As the white crane prepared to land, Mo Qingcheng gasped, an expression of wonder shone on her face.

The entire city was surrounded by towering stone peaks, as though it were a part of the mountains, it emanated an air of majesty like a divine work of nature.

The surrounding peaks were all too vast and gigantic, with the effect of diminishing the city's appearance when looked at from the sky. In reality, this city wasn't smaller than that of the Royal Capital of Chu. It was difficult to imagine such a lively city existed out in the middle of nowhere, with many people living within its walls.

“Let's dismount,” Qin Wentian said in a low voice, as the white

crane landed within the Demon Mountain City. Aside from signs of many humans living within the city, there were also crowds of demonic beasts roaming about. These beasts were not like those that were controlled by humans, but rather, they moved about of their own volition, actually living in harmony with the humans. What a strange place, and how aptly named. It was no wonder they called it the Demon Mountain City.

Qin Wentian retrieved the map once again; the mark indicated a palace of immense size located in the middle of the Demon Mountain City.

“The Azure Emperor’s secret wasn’t hidden in the Emperor Star Academy. Instead, there was only this map. “If this palace really hides a heaven-defying cultivation art allowing one to have multiple Yuanfus, what sort of tests would be waiting for me?” Qin Wentian thought to himself, as he and Mo Qingcheng strolled about the city.

Suddenly, the earth shuddered. Tremors could be felt as a berserk demonic beast galloped on the pathway, causing the crowd to give way to it.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng turned around in time to see an extremely savage looking Hawk-eye Lion dashing towards them. Immense power could be felt in its steps, and a youth mounted on the lion roared to the crowd ahead, “Get lost!”

They moved to the side of the streets as the Hawk-eye Lion rushed over. The youth mounted on the back of the demonic lion possessed eagle-like eyes , sharp and imposing. He swept a glance

over to Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng, and upon seeing the incomparably elegant face of Mo Qingcheng clad in a male's robes, he opened his mouth and spat out flames. The intense flames gushed towards the pair as they both retreated backwards, frowns lining their faces.

A demon-like smile painted the youth's countenance, as he gazed at Mo Qingcheng. "If this is a woman, her beauty is definitely of a higher quality than those from the Celestial Lake Palace."

After which, he laughed uproariously and departed.

Upon hearing his words, the crowd swept their gazes over to Mo Qingcheng. Indeed, although dressed in the robes of a male, anyone could tell that she was a peerless beauty just by looking at her.

Qin Wentian frowned, only to see Mo Qingcheng pulling his hands along. "Let's hurry to our destination."

Mo Qingcheng understood that since they were outsiders, it was better to keep a low profile. Over here, experts were as common as clouds, unlike the small country of Chu. It was always better to be safe than sorry.

"I apologise..." Qin Wentian sighed, blaming himself for his lack of strength. Mo Qingcheng wouldn't have to put up with any of this if he had more power.

“If you are sorry, all the more reason for you to hurry up and get stronger.” Mo Qingcheng laughed. They hastened their steps, and as they finally arrived at the map’s marked location, their eyes beheld a palace of immense size in front of them. Above the palace gate, was a huge arch inscribed with three gigantic words – Celestial Lake Palace.

This was none other than the Celestial Lake Palace mentioned by the arrogant youth mounted on the demonic lion earlier. This was also the place indicated in the Azure Emperor’s map.

“Ai,” a voice exclaimed in surprise, coming from a group of cultivators walking in the direction of Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Accompanying these people, were none other than the young man and woman they had met as they flew here.

“Seems like we have a predestined affinity, do you guys also wish to visit the celestial lake?” the young man inquired. He was extremely happy to see Mo Qingcheng again.

“What kind of place is the celestial lake?” Qin Wentian asked curiously. He wanted to be clear on the exact reason the map of Dicang (Azure Emperor) had marked this place.

“The Celestial Lake Palace is the symbol of the Demon Mountain City, founded by the Demonic Fairy Qingmei 3,000 years ago. With 3,000 years of time, the city gradually developed to what it was today. In the past, this place was a land of desolation, only inhabited by the demonic beasts, but look at how bustling the atmosphere of this place is today. Not only that, there are many celestial beauties within the Celestial Lake Palace, all of them

exceptionally beautiful.

The young man laughed as he continued, “Naturally, if those beauties of the Celestial Lake Palace were to compare themselves to her, she would still come out superior.”

After which, he swept his gaze over to Mo Qingcheng again, an inscrutable expression marking his eyes.

“3,000 years ago,” Qin Wentian mumbled. In that case, she was of the same era as the Azure Emperor. But why was she called the Demonic Fairy Qingmei? Could she be a demonic beast that had eventually taken on the form of a human?

“Since the Celestial Lake Palace only accepts female disciples, why are there so many people coming here?” Qin Wentian inquired again.

“Yeah, Fairy Qingmei only accepts females as her disciples, and they must all be extremely beautiful. To understand her reasons for not accepting male disciples, we must first talk about the legends relating to the Azure Emperor and Fairy Qingmei. In the past, the Azure Emperor was ranked first out of the 36 starlords. Do you understand how awe-inspiring that was? Despite the admiration and love of countless women, he rejected them all for a single woman. A beautiful story about the love between a human and a demon, it touched the hearts of a few but incurred the scorn and hatred of many others. In the end, for reasons unknown, the Azure Emperor abandoned Fairy Qingmei, causing her love for him to turn into hate, to the point where it was rumored she pursued the Azure Emperor, seeking his death. And when the Azure

Emperor abruptly disappeared, the Fairy Qingmei could only return to the Demon Mountain City, living in seclusion.”

The young man seemed to be in extremely high spirits, speaking with assurance, as though he intentionally wanted to show off his knowledge. “This humble me is named Yi Xiang, and I come from the Demon Continent. I wonder, how should I address the two of you?”

“I’m Qin Wentian, and this is my girlfriend,” Qin Wentian replied indifferently, but his heart shivered with excitement.

If the Fairy Qingmei really did have a relationship with the Azure Emperor in the past, this meant that he was in the right place. There was no mistake; this palace was the very spot marked on the map of Dicang.

AGM 180 – Ouyang Kuangsheng

Upon hearing Qin Wentian refer to her as his girlfriend, an expression of shyness shimmered within the depths of her beautiful eyes. A sweet smile adorned her face, indicating that her heart had already agreed and approved this relationship .

However, Mo Qingcheng also felt somewhat amazed, had she really fallen in love with this guy? If it were a year ago, she would definitely not feel this way.

Upon hearing his words, disappointment could be seen clouding the features of Yi Xiang. The reason he wormed his way into being friends with Qin Wentian was naturally because of Mo Qingcheng's beauty.

“I see.” Yi Xiang smiled with a nod, silently cursing the dogshit luck of Qin Wentian. Exactly what kind of background did he have to cause Mo Qingcheng to fall in love with him?

The moment he thought of this, Yi Xiang tried to probe more as he asked, “Doesn't Brother Qin know the reason we are here? Which state city in the nine continents is Brother Qin from?”

“I truly have no idea, I'm not from any of the nine state cities.” Qin Wentian casually replied, not bothering to explain in detail.

“As to why they named it the Celestial Lake Palace, this was due to the natural celestial lake found within the palace. The lake was of especially great help to cultivators below the Heavenly Dipper

Realm. There was a huge commotion during the year that Fairy Qingmei discovered the lake, with many powerful experts seeking to possess it. But what sort of character was the Azure Emperor? He was ranked first among the 36 heavenly starlords! On account of the Azure Emperor, even the various overlords of the nine continents had to give face, and not fight Fairy Qingmei for the celestial lake.”

Yi Xiang explained, “After news of the Azure Emperor’s disappearance was made known, many other powers began to voice their objections, not wishing Fairy Qingmei to possess the celestial lake alone. Fairy Qingmei then issued a proclamation allowing talented youths from the nine continents to come visit any time. As long as they could pass the tests she designed, they would be able to enjoy the benefits of the celestial lake. It was only then did the other powers cease their protests. After all, no one wanted to offend the extremely long-lived celestial demoness.

Only then did Qin Wentian understand. Demons were different from humans; a majority of demonic beasts had an extremely slow cultivation rate. However, their lifespan was much longer compared to humans. Especially for those demonic beasts that had broken through to the Heavenly Dipper Realm, after obtaining forms of humanity, they would have a lifespan of around 5,000 to 6,000 years. In consideration of that, the other powers naturally wouldn’t dare to push Fairy Qingmei too far.

“If that’s the case, does this mean that all the cultivators are here because they wish to borrow the celestial lake’s powers to aid in their cultivation?” Qin Wentian swept a glance at the crowded streets, and indeed, young cultivators of both genders flooded the area. They were about 25-26 years of age and many had

extraordinary demeanors. None of them would dare to come here without possessing a certain level of strength.

Far off in the distance, a gaze was directed over to Qin Wentian as he observed the crowd., The onlooker laughed demonically; it was none other than the arrogant young man from before, the one who rode the Hawk-eye Lion.

Yi Xiang followed the gaze of Qin Wentian, and upon seeing the young man, his countenance underwent a slight change. Speaking in a whisper, “That’s the beastman named Shiki, from the Beast King Hall, one of the hegemonic powers of the Demon Continent.”

“Beastman?” Qin Wentian’s eyes flickered.

Yi Xiang sidled up to Qin Wentian as he lightly remarked, “The master of the Beast King Hall is a demonic lion at the Heavenly Dipper Realm. The beast king is extremely lecherous, and has slept with many human wives and concubines. With both demonic and human blood flowing in their veins, their descendants were known as beastmen. This Shiki is a descendant of the beast king himself.

“Hey brat, what are you mumbling about?” Shiki stated coldly, glancing over at Yi Xiang, causing him to shiver. With a smile, Yi Xiang quickly replied, “Just casually chatting.”

“Oh, is that so?” Shiki shifted his gaze to the young woman behind Yi Xiang, licking his lips, as an expression of lust appeared in his eyes. At his actions, the young woman felt intense anger boiling in her heart; the descendants of the beast king were all

incomparably licentious in their shameless behaviour.

At that moment, a few ladies clad in white walked out of the Celestial Lake Palace to stand in front of the crowd, each appearing as beautiful as a celestial maiden.

The crowd's attention shifted over and saw the graceful silhouettes clad in muslin, upon which the majority of people lost their senses as they stared in rapture.

It appeared that the rumours the Fairy Qingmei only accepted exceptionally beautiful women as her disciples were true. In addition to gaining permission to use the celestial lake, those who passed the tests could also choose a female disciple to be their dao companion, provided that the female disciple agreed. This enheartened many to pass, igniting their fighting spirit.

This rule had never been broken despite the passage of thousands of years. Nobody understood the Fairy Qingmei's reasoning for doing this.

“Everyone, please, you may enter the Celestial Lake Palace now.” The celestial maidens led the way, as the crowd followed behind, stepping into the Celestial Lake Palace.

The interior of the palace was splendid in its magnificence. The cultivators entered a long hallway with pavilions situated to the left and right. Every pavilion was graceful and unique, with each of them already occupied by people. The majority of the crowd reserved cold looks on their faces, upon seeing the heads of the

residents peeking out. These people should be similar to them, coming here to take the test. What foolish dreams they had; the Celestial Lake Palace opens to the public once a month, and only a total of seven people would be able to enter the celestial lake each time.

And this month, there were numerous cultivators coming to try their luck, it wouldn't be easy for anyone to stand above the rest.

Qin Wentian contemplated the Celestial Lake Palace, feeling wonder in his heart. To think that the palace design of Fairy Qingmei would be so charming, it's scenic beauty was akin to a dream-like quality. At the end of the long hallway, they arrived at an area filled with residential buildings, arranged in picturesque disorder. Located right ahead, there was a flight of stairs and at the end of the stairway, was the celestial palace.

“Is Fairy Qingmei still around?” Qin Wentian mused, he could already confirm that the location in the map of Dicang was referring to this place, but had no idea as to what should be done after finding it.

According to Yi Xiang, legend has it that the Azure Emperor abandoned the Fairy Qingmei. However, Qin Wentian had doubts. There should be many things concealed within, otherwise the Azure Emperor wouldn't have left the map scroll on the 9th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion, and would not have ordered the headmaster of each generation to stand guard there.

Qin Wentian had a bold hypothesis, maybe the greatest secret of the Azure Emperor wasn't in the Azure Emperor Palace, but was

left under the protection of Fairy Qingmei instead.

Naturally, Qin Wentian came to this conclusion only because he had the map of Dicang. Back then, after those powerful old freaks witnessed the Azure Emperor battling it out with Fairy Qingmei, it would never have crossed their minds the possibility of her guarding the hiding place of the Azure Emperor's greatest secret.

“Shiki, you non-human, non-demon piece of shit dares to come here, too? Are you not afraid that I, your father, will turn you into something neither human nor demon?” A loud, clear voice resounded, causing Yi Xiang to tremble in shock. Who was it that dared to publicly humiliate Shiki of the Beast King Hall like this?

Turning his head, Yi Xiang saw a youth clad in blue robes, about 18 years of age. The young man had a squarish face, with huge eyes, and was laughing uproariously at Shiki.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng.” Yi Xiang drew in a breath. The cultivators who came here wouldn't have too high a level of cultivation. Usually, youths below the 3rd level of Yuanfu would pay a visit to the Celestial Lake Palace; the majority of them would be at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, wishing to borrow the mystical effects of the Celestial Lake to breakthrough to Yuanfu. The Yuanfu formed with the mystical effects of the celestial lake would be larger than usual, enabling the cultivator to store even more Astral Energy within.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was also at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, and considering his age, his cultivation base still being at the peak of Arterial Circulation Realm wasn't something to be

proud of. In the nine continents, there were numerous youths already at the Yuanfu level. However, there was a faction of cultivators who placed more importance in consolidating foundations, done by increasing their level of affinity and sensory abilities first. Thus, in order to ease their future cultivation pathway, there were many who chose to condense an Astral Soul only after a long period of time, resulting in a later age to start cultivation compared to others.

This Ouyang Kuangsheng belonged to the second type of cultivators. He paid no heed to the thoughts of others, and only began cultivation after the age of 16. Not just outsiders, even within his clan, there were many who looked down on him.

However, in one night, Ouyang Kuangsheng shocked everyone when he condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer. The entire Ouyang Clan was in an uproar, silently admiring Ouyang Kuangsheng's resolution, having determined that he was a character worthy of being nurtured.

Indeed, in the next two years, Ouyang Kuangsheng's cultivation advanced by leaps and bounds, quickly reaching the peak of Arterial Circulation. Although he was slower compared to some others, both of the Astral Souls he condensed were from the 4th Heavenly Layer. Thus, his combat prowess was extremely tyrannical and not many on the same level could defeat him.

Shiki was another such tyrannical character; had it been any other cultivator with a cultivation base at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation other than Ouyang Kuangsheng, he would have definitely slaughtered them for speaking to him in such a manner.

However, he wasn't confident he had the ability to defeat Ouyang Kuangsheng.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, remember what you just said,” Shiki coldly remarked.

“You think as your father, I would be afraid of you?” Ouyang Kuangsheng continued laughing loudly as a beautiful young lady appeared beside him. Upon seeing her, an expression of extreme fascination appeared on the face of Yi Xiang. She too, accompanied Ouyang Kuangsheng.

It seemed that this time around, the journey to the Celestial Lake Palace was filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons, with the rumor that Yao Sheng from the Skydemon Sect had also arrived earlier as well. He was also an extremely hard-to-deal with character and at this thought, Yi Xiang gradually lost his confidence, and felt somewhat depressed.

“First off, would everyone please choose your place of residence? You are all welcome to stay in the still empty pavilions. There are still a few more days before the date of the tests,” announced those from the Celestial Lake Palace, and the crowd dispersed, choosing the pavilion that they wanted to stay in.

“Let's stay there.” Qin Wentian pointed at a pavilion, as he smiled at Mo Qingcheng.

“Okay.” Mo Qingcheng agreed, and together they walked towards and entered the pavilion. It was split into two levels; the first level

consisted of a living room while the second level consisted of two bed rooms, just big enough for the two of them.

Walking to the balcony outside the bedroom, Qin Wentian discovered that Yi Xiang and his companion chose the pavilion opposite to them, while Ouyang Kuangsheng chose the residence beside Yi Xiang.

“Hey kid, where are you from?” Curiosity flickered in Ouyang Kuangsheng’s eyes as he fixed his gaze towards Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian was 17 years of age, fiendishly handsome. His eyes had an incredible depth to them, possessing an air of uniqueness.

“I’m from a very small country, I don’t think you would have heard of it.” Qin Wentian laughed. “How about you?”

Ouyang Kuangsheng stared blankly, but quickly recovered with a grin on his face. Yi Xiang in the next pavilion, suddenly added, “Brother Qin, this person is Ouyang Kuangsheng, a young elite from the Ouyang Clan of the Azure Continent.”

As Yi Xiang made the introduction, he nodded his head towards Ouyang Kuangsheng as though he was intent on expressing his good will. However, Qin Wentian had no concept of the Ouyang Clan’s power, and didn’t know who Ouyang Kuangsheng was.

“The Azure Continent, the Azure Emperor Palace should be located there,” Qin Wentian mumbled to himself, and upon

hearing his words, Ouyang Kuangsheng was momentarily startled, before laughing earnestly. What an interesting kid. Although the Azure Emperor Palace was incomparably glorious in the past, their power had gradually waned over the years. How could they still be mentioned on equal terms with the Ouyang Clan?

Yi Xiang was speechless as well. Could it be that in the eyes of Qin Wentian, the Azure Emperor Palace had a higher level of importance compared to the Ouyang Clan?

AGM 181 – Entrance To The Celestial Lake

Yi Xiang stared at Qin Wentian as he stated, “Brother Qin, although the Ouyang Clan and the Azure Emperor Palace were both situated in the Azure Continent, their levels cannot be compared to each other. The Ouyang Clan’s power can be ranked amongst the top few within the Nine Continents. Not only that, out of all the younger generations of the Ouyang Clan, Brother Ouyang could be considered one of their top talents, with both his astral souls condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer.”

Qin Wentian’s heart thudded slightly as he cast a glance at Ouyang Kuangsheng. It was extremely rare for someone to condense both their Astral Souls from the 4th Heavenly Layer; the Nine Continents were indeed a place filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons.

“Stop kissing my ass, look at my age, I’ve not even stepped into Yuanfu. There’s nothing for me to boast about.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed straightforwardly, as though he didn’t give a damn.

Yi Xiang’s lips trembled; his intention to fawn seemed obvious from his tone and choice of words.

“Brother Qin, although this time around there’s no hope of you seizing the opportunity to dip into the celestial lake, you can still consider this to be a widening of your perspectives.” Yi Xiang quickly shifted the conversation back to Qin Wentian, his tone sounding slightly boastful, as he felt gratified to see how seriously Qin Wentian listened to him.

After chatting for a while longer, Qin Wentian returned to his room with his heart involuntarily filled with worry regarding the storm in Chu.

Compared to those characters out there, the geniuses from Chu undoubtedly lost their splendor. And with his current strength, he was unable to be of any help regarding the chaotic tempest brewing in Chu. Although he had inherited the map of Dicang from the Azure Emperor, he was still totally clueless as to what he should do next. Qin Wentian could only take one step at a time now.

“What are you thinking about?” Mo Qingcheng entered the room. Upon seeing her incompatible attire, Qin Wentian couldn’t help but laugh, causing Mo Qingcheng to glare at him.

“I’m thinking that if your clan members knew that I’ve kidnapped you to such a faraway place, would they go all out and fight me to the death?” Qin Wentian gently smiled.

“Pfft, in that case, you’d have to bear the responsibility.” Mo Qingcheng laughed.

“Bear the responsibility?” A bright light shone in Qin Wentian’s eyes, as he stared at Mo Qingcheng intently, causing the mischievous expression on Mo Qingcheng’s face to turn into one of extreme shyness as she replied, “You rascal.”

After which, Mo Qingcheng ran out of the room in a fluster,

causing Qin Wentian to smile with fondness.

In the following days, there would be numerous people arriving daily. Qin Wentian glanced down from his balcony and saw two rows of silhouettes walking in a line. A cultivator leading one of the lines was a girl of extreme beauty and upon seeing her, Qin Wentian couldn't help but freeze slightly in surprise before he smiled and called out, "Hey, Qian Mengyu."

Qian Mengyu glanced upwards and at the sight of Qin Wentian, an expression of astonishment appeared on her face. Ever since that escapade in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds, she had sent people to investigate news of Qin Wentian. The information report returned stating that in one of the countries under the administrations of Nine Mystical Palace, there was indeed a person named Qin Wentian in Chu. It was also reported that he was exceptionally famous, but other than that, she didn't know anything else about him.

"What are you doing here?" Qian Mengyu smiled. So a small country like Chu also knew of the existence of the Celestial Lake Palace?

"The same reason as you." Qin Wentian laughed. Being able to meet here could also be counted as a form of fate, and thus Qin Wentian's attitude was much warmer now compared to back then in the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds. After all, Qian Mengyu had aided him once, not to mention her sword technique, Nine Swords of Life, may indicate a possible connection to Gongyang Hong.

"Then, I will be staying there." Qian Mengyu pointed to a

pavilion beside that of Qin Wentian, as she walked up to the second level.

“This time around, Greencloud Pavilion sent out many disciples. The tests of the Celestial Lake Palace are exceedingly dangerous, so why don’t you join us? At the very least, we can keep a look out for each other,” Qian Mengyu remarked. In her heart, she wanted to help Qin Wentian. This fellow didn’t have any kind of powerful background to speak of, he must have faced countless dangers before making his way here. Since they had crossed paths, it was natural for her to extend a helping hand to him.

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded his head, not thinking too deeply into it as he asked, “Can I ask you something? Is the Nine Swords of Life a unique sword-type innate technique belonging to your Greencloud Pavilion?”

“It can be considered so.” Qian Mengyu nodded, continuing, “This set of sword techniques contain many transformations, and an undying will. For me, my mastery level is only at the tip of the iceberg, however back then my aunt had cultivated this sword technique to an incredible heights. She was able to manifest the sword energy of this technique to attack using a sword-type divine imprint, further enhancing its might.”

“Aunt?” Qin Wentian’s heart pounded. Could her aunt be the woman Gongyang Hong loved?

To be precise, weren’t the four human-type Divine Inscription Paintings inscribed by the woman Gongyang Hong loved?!

“Why do you ask? Do you train in sword techniques as well?” Qian Mengyu laughed.

“No, just casually asking. Your aunt must be very powerful,” Qin Wentian remarked.

“Yeah! Not only is my aunt extremely beautiful, her talent in cultivation is exceedingly high as well. There are many others out to pursue her but sadly, she’s trapped by matters of the heart.” Qian Mengyu sighed, before stiffening. Why was she talking to Qin Wentian about such things.

Seeing the warm smile on Qin Wentian’s gentle countenance, Qian Mengyu could only laugh bitterly in her heart before abruptly turning away. Although this young man’s talent wasn’t unacceptable, if he were to truly fall in love with her, she would certainly reject him. She was only helping him out because of their coincidental meeting.

Qin Wentian was unaware of the mistaken thoughts running through Qian Mengyu’s mind. Seeing that she had no more interest in continuing the conversation, he too turned to walk back into his room as he saw Mo Qingcheng quietly sitting there.

“I once had a chance meeting with her, and there’s a high probability that she has some connection with Senior Gongyang,” Qin Wentian explained. Mo Qingcheng gazed at him as she nodded and laughed; the sound of her laughter was extremely endearing.

Qin Wentian retrieved one of the four paintings gifted by Gongyang Hong. This painting was none other than the Divine Inscription Painting of the Nine Swords of Life, however, the inscriptions etched in the painting only contained a kind of concept; there was no way to use it for attacking purposes. Qin Wentian had once received memories of divine imprints before. If he could utilise some of the complicated 3rd-level imprints stored in his memory, how tyrannical would his attacks be then?

Qin Wentian had already established in the past that divine imprints and innate techniques shared the same roots.

His eyes gradually brightened, but his excitement was soon replaced by a look of unease. If he wanted to use 3rd-level divine imprints as a direct attack, the power behind such a move would be extremely dominating. The downside was that it would require him to exhaust a large amount of his Divine Yuan Energy. Before stepping into Yuanfu, he would only be able to execute this kind of attack a couple of times at the most, before running dry of energy.

A gentle smile appeared on Mo Qingcheng's face as she saw the serious look of contemplation on Qin Wentian's countenance. What was this fellow thinking of to be so engrossed within his thoughts?

“At the Astral River Hall, after seeing the attack of the multitude of fist-lights, I comprehended the concept of the second stance of the Great Dream Halberd Art – Fallen Star. However, if I were to use a sword-type Divine Yuan to amplify my attacks...” A sharp glint of light flashed in Qin Wentian's eyes; if what he imagined was reality, Yuanfu realm opponents may not be undefeatable after

all.

Inclining his head, Qin Wentian saw Mo Qingcheng smiling at him with a tender look of gentleness in her eyes. Warmth filled his heart, and a sudden impulse overtook him.

“What are you thinking about?” Mo Qingcheng still hadn’t noticed the peculiar look on Qin Wentian’s face. As the sound of her voice faded, Qin Wentian had already enveloped her into a hug, gently kissing her on the cheek, causing her to be stunned as though struck by a bolt of lightning.

Abruptly, Qin Wentian stood up and ran away. Only then did Mo Qingcheng come back to her senses. Her face instantly flushed with redness, giggling as she stared at Qin Wentian running away. She couldn’t imagine a moment more beautiful than this.

Qin Wentian didn’t come out from his room after that. Mo Qingcheng occasionally peeked in on him, only to see him silently meditating with Yuan Meteor Stones clutched in his hands.

Currently, Astral Energy was unceasingly being gathered within Qin Wentian’s body, condensing into sword-type Divine Yuan Energy, as an aura of unparalleled sharpness emanated out from him.

All sword attacks were incredibly sharp, and if he were to augment his existing attacks with his present sword-type, Divine Yuan Energy, the power of his attacks would undoubtedly rise to another level. However, to forcibly convert all his Astral Energy

into Divine Yuan Energy would exhaust a great amount of Yuan Meteor Stones. Luckily, the current him wasn't lacking in cultivation resources.

Apart from this, he could create a dreamscape, to observe whether his idea was correct.

The next day, people from the Celestial Lake Palace arrived to extend an invitation to them. Everyone left their pavilions and stepped into the long hallway, walking in the direction of the Celestial Lake Palace.

"So many people." Qin Wentian cast a glance at the long hallway swamped with people. There was at least several hundreds in the crowd.

"This amount can't be considered many. The Grand Xia Empire is too vast, and the celestial lake is of paramount importance to cultivators at the 9th level of Arterial Circulation. Even young elites belonging to powerful clans and factions will make the trip to here. Firstly, they can immerse themselves in the waters of the celestial lake. Secondly, they can use the opportunity to temper themselves through the dangers faced on their journey over here," Qian Mengyu explained in a low voice.

"This place is open to all? Doesn't the Celestial Lake Palace reject anyone?" Qin Wentian asked, curiosity evident in his voice.

"Yup, this was the promise Fairy Qingmei made back then. Also, she had no need to obstruct those who came, because the weaker

ones wouldn't even see their deaths coming until too late," Qian Mengyu explained.

The current Mo Qingcheng was dressed up as a man to avoid unnecessary trouble. She had also smeared something on her face, causing her to look even more unusual, but fortunately it completely masked her stunning countenance.

Qian Mengyu and the girl beside Ouyang Kuangsheng were also extremely beautiful. Although their beauty was just half a step inferior to Mo Qingcheng's, they had no need to conceal their features because they were not afraid of trouble.

The Celestial Lake Palace representatives led the crowd towards a great hall. The interior was decorated extravagantly: gigantic stone pillars stood erect, and the outer edges of the hall was designed to look like the starry skies.

All the girls in the great hall were peerless in their beauty.

The crowd gathered within, and directly facing them was a pool of Astral Lake Water. This pool was extremely beautiful to gaze upon, reflecting a dazzling, radiant sheen of starlight.

"This is the entrance to the Celestial Lake. Indeed, it is a mystical place. The waters of the celestial lake are completely filled with inconceivable amounts of Astral Energy." Many people gasped in shock.

Ahead of the great hall, a beautiful woman sat atop an Astral Throne, smiling at the crowd.

“We greet the Palace Mistress.” The crowd bowed to show their respect. A majority of the crowd snuck glances at the girls that stood to the side of the beautiful woman, expressions of unconcealed admiration evident in their eyes.

Too breathtakingly beautiful, they were akin to fireworks in the mortal world. Just merely standing there caused people in the crowd to feel ashamed of their own inferiority.

The majority of females within the crowd seemed to have lost their splendor, and even Mo Qingcheng’s eyes flickered as she commented, “They are all so beautiful.”

“We’ve finally found a female whose looks are comparable to yours.” Qin Wentian nudged Mo Qingcheng, whispering into her ears, causing her to roll her eyes at him.

“Yeah, but doesn’t her demeanor seem a bit cold?”

“Right.” Qin Wentian nodded lightly, the woman facing them gave people a feeling of being as cold as ice and indifferent to all; by her appearance it seemed impossible to approach her.

AGM 182 – Dangers Of The Refinement Grounds

One was unable to determine the age of the Palace Mistress merely from looking at her features. It was rumored that she was the successor of Fairy Qingmei, but no one knew whether or not this was true.

After Fairy Qingmei decided to live in seclusion, she created the Celestial Lake Palace and accepted female disciples, imparting her knowledge and techniques over the generations. Despite doing so, outsiders rarely caught a glimpse of her. It was as though she had already truly seen through all secular affairs and worldly attachments.

At this moment, the Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace smiled and nodded to the crowd. “If you wish to enter the celestial lake, all of you should already comprehend the danger within. I wonder how many of the young elites here are from the transcendent powers of the Nine Continents?”

“This junior over here originated from the Azure Continent, I’m Ouyang Kuangsheng from the Ouyang Clan. My clan lord inquires after the well-being of Fairy Qingmei.” Ouyang Kuangsheng exclaimed straightforwardly, taking a step forwards. After which, the girl beside him also spoke, “Wind Continent, Jiang Ting from the Jiang Clan, pays her respect to the Palace Mistress.”

Ouyang Kuangsheng was blunt and outspoken, while the female emitted a faint aura of arrogance. This was her natural disposition and not out of rudeness towards the Palace Mistress.

“Descendants of the Ouyang and Jiang Clan, please take a seat.” The Palace Mistress smiled with a nod. Chairs had already been prepared by those from the Celestial Lake Palace from earlier. Ouyang Kuangsheng and Jiang Ting did not act with fake courtesy as they seated themselves, with others from their respective clans standing behind them.

“To think that Ouyang Kuangsheng is actually together with Jiang Ting.” A strange glow passed through the eyes of many. The Ouyang Clan and the Jiang Clan, were all transcendent powers in the Nine Continents.

“Beast King Hall, Shiki,” Shiki stated indifferently as he stepped forwards. The crowd was abuzz. Evidently, those originating from transcendent-level powers in the Nine Continents were a cut above their peers, all of them majestic and an awe-inspiring sight.

“You are bestowed a seat.” The Palace Mistress laughed.

“War Continent, Wang Xiao from the Wang Clan.” Another white robed youth stepped forward, to the shocked murmurs from the surrounding people. Seeing that the Wang Clan had shown up as well, it seemed like all the transcendent powers wanted to use the expedition to the Celestial Lake Palace as a way to temper their younger generations. Those present had a cultivation base of at least the 9th level of Arterial Circulation, not to mention there were even some Yuanfu cultivators within the gathering as well.

“Yan Continent, Mu Baifei.” Another youth stepped forward.

This youth was clad in a long, white robe, appearing extremely neat with a hint of delicateness. But for all that, one could sense an incredible sharpness from the middle of his brows.

Swallow Swordsman, this person was definitely a Swallow Swordsman.

“Skydemon Sect, Yao Sheng.”

“Greencloud Pavilion, Qian Mengyu.”

As several people stepped forth, the Palace Mistress granted each of them a seat. The crowd carefully observed those silhouettes that sat down, silently marking down their appearances. Any one of these individuals could become the next dazzling stars of their generation in the Nine Continents. Just Ouyang Kuangsheng alone was already extremely remarkable.

“Qin Wentian, you come over as well.” After Qian Mengyu sat down, she called out towards Qin Wentian, who still mingled in the crowd. Those from the Greencloud Pavilion all stood behind her chair.

Qin Wentian stiffened for a moment before lightly nodding his head, walking over to Qian Mengyu. Since Qian Mengyu had already spoken, it would be rude to reject her.

“Are these two also from the Azure Continent?” The Palace Mistress smiled as she regarded Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. It

seemed that regardless of whoever she met, she would still treat them as a respected guest.

“They are friends of mine, from a place named the Chu Country,” Qian Mengyu replied with a smile. A bright light flashed through the Palace Mistress’s eyes, as she stared intently at Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

However, the Palace Mistress quickly shifted her gaze away and greeted the crowd with a smile. “There are only seven open positions for cultivators wishing to immerse themselves in the celestial lake. All of you should already be aware of the danger level, and I shall not elaborate on that. I only hope that everyone will show mercy should they fight against each other. The time limit is one month.”

Everyone nodded their heads; they naturally understood the rules.

“Enter then, I shall not take up more of your time. However, demonic beasts are forbidden to be brought inside.” The Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace laughed, as the crowd erupted in excitement, all parties dashing towards the entrance of the celestial lake.

“Let’s go.” Qian Mengyu stood up, following the crowd to the flight of stairs descending downwards. Qin Wentian discovered that the water in the entrance of the celestial lake, didn’t share the normal properties of water, and their clothing remained dry.

“What a mystical place.” An expression of awe painted Qin Wentian’s face, as he stepped through the entrance of the celestial lake together with Mo Qingcheng. In that very instant, Qin Wentian felt a surge of mysterious energy acting on his body.

“My Yuanfu.” Mo Qingcheng’s beautiful eyes widened in surprise. After passing the entrance, she realised that the Yuanfu within her body had been completely severed from her arterial pathways.

The moment they stepped completely into the water, Qin Wentian and the rest discovered that the flight of stairs was still visible, as though they had been transported to another space filled with resplendent Astral Light. Also ahead of them, was an ancient pathway.

Qian Mengyu stared at Mo Qingcheng with astonishment in her eyes, “Don’t you all know the effects of the celestial lake’s Refinement Grounds?”

“Hmm, we’re not very clear about that.” Qin Wentian shook his head.

“Both of you are too ridiculous.” Qian Mengyu couldn’t help but berate them, “Why are you guys even here if you have no knowledge about this place? The Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace is similar to the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds and is also one of the eighteen testing grounds of the Grand Xia Empire. There’s a mysterious surge of energy that will seal the Yuanfus of Yuanfu cultivators. Upon stepping inside, cultivators at the Yuanfu Realm would be at the peak of Arterial Circulation;

they are unable to enjoy the immense amount of Astral Energy from Yuan droplets stored within their Yuanfu. If not for this, there would be no point for cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm to come here.”

“Naturally, even if their Yuanfu was sealed, the innate techniques cultivated by Yuanfu cultivators would obviously be stronger than those at the Arterial Circulation Realm. This was to their advantage, but could also end as unfavourable to them. Stronger innate techniques naturally meant a higher energy consumption rate. And over here, they would only be courting their own death as they have no way to replenish it from their Yuanfus.”

Qin Wentian’s gaze froze. By sealing the Yuanfus and severing the connection between them and the arterial pathways, even the task of flying would be difficult.

Over here in the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace, the advantages Yuanfu cultivators enjoyed were reduced to the bare minimum.

“It is said that the celestial lake was formed naturally, but with the addition of modifications by the Celestial Lake Palace, the level of danger here has risen as well. It wasn’t so easy to snatch one of the seven open spots, you guys are really too ridiculous,” Qian Mengyu coldly remarked.

Although her tone was unpleasant to hear, Qin Wentian knew that it was because of her concern for them. Naturally, he didn’t take offence and quickly replied with a smile, “Can we just follow

you, then? Where is the location of the actual celestial lake?”

“The celestial lake lies at the end of the Refinement Grounds.” Qian Mengyu eyed the ancient pathway as she spoke. Qin Wentian discovered that the other cultivators had already set off, dashing ahead as though they were rushed for time.

“Mengyu, why are you telling them so much? We should hurry up and move on as well.” A girl with exquisite looking features standing at the side frowned as she glared at Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng, appearing somewhat unhappy. She didn’t know what Qian Mengyu was thinking.

“Move out then,” Qian Mengyu coldly instructed, as her group of cultivators dashed ahead with extreme speed.

Qin Wentian turned his gaze forwards; he discovered that the other cultivators on the ancient pathway purposely kept their distance from each other, all appearing to be extremely cautious. This was even more glaringly obvious when it came to the chosen ones originating from the various transcendent powers. Not only did they keep their distance, some of the other cultivators had also formed temporary alliances.

Upon witnessing this, Qin Wentian came to a sudden realisation. Since there were only seven spots available at each opening, the most dangerous thing within the Refinement Grounds would be none other than the treacherous hearts of humanity.

But even so, many people treated this as a tempering experience.

He guessed that for those who made it here, they should already possess a certain level of self confidence in their own prowess.

“The Forest of Hallucination, be careful here. This place will stall us for a period of time.” Qian Mengyu surveyed the forest ahead, seeing the other cultivators dashing towards the entrance and how their presences instantly disappeared as they passed through.

“Stay behind me and follow closely.” Qian Mengyu’s countenance turned sluggish as they entered the Forest of Hallucination. Once inside, a maze materialised in the form of numerous ancient-looking trees.

Qian Mengyu waved a group of her cultivators forward. The group slowed their pace, trying to find a way out of the forested maze. However, they soon realised that there was no way for them to leave, and moreover, they had lost sight of the others.

“Indeed, the effects of this place matches what was mentioned in the rumors.” Qian Mengyu added, “The Refinement Grounds is a place to battle for survival of the fittest; luck is never counted as a factor.”

“What should we do now?” someone asked Qian Mengyu.

“We will rest here in our original spot,” Qian Mengyu spoke, as she sat down on the grass.

In the quietness of the Forest of Hallucination, a stifling pressure

could be felt emanating forth from within, giving an extremely sinister feeling.

Rustling sounds rang out, and Qian Mengyu stiffened as she gazed vigilantly at her surroundings.

Swiftly after, a line of silhouettes appeared in her field of vision. They were none other than the people from the Beast King Hall, with Shiki in the lead.

Upon seeing Qian Mengyu, Shiki's licentious smile widened as his steps slowed. The uncontrolled, voracious desires of beasts heated his eyes.

Qian Mengyu frowned, as she icily stated, "Shiki, could it be that your Beast King Hall wishes to clash with my Greencloud Pavilion? I can assure you that it won't be a good decision."

"Oh, is that so?" The sinister looking smile on Shiki's face widened even further. Qian Mengyu turned her gaze aside, only to see another group of figures appear.

"Yao Sheng from the Skydemon Sect." Qian Mengyu froze, her countenance turning extremely unsightly. The Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect were both transcendent powers in the Demon Continent; to think that they had actually allied together.

"You can only blame it on your own bad luck," Yao Sheng stated sinisterly, before sweeping a glance at Qin Wentian. Of course, he

still remembered this person, and their previous encounter at the Spirit Beasts Testing Grounds back then.

“Run,” Qian Mengyu whispered, causing her fellow cultivators to tremble in reaction. Despite this unfortunate timing, Qian Mengyu acted with extreme decisiveness; the Demon Continent allied forces wouldn’t be able to wipe them all out in a single swoop if they all chose to escape instead of clashing directly.

“You guys, I want her alive.” Shiki pointed to Mo Qingcheng, who was standing beside Qin Wentian, while he himself, moved towards Qian Mengyu, lust apparent in his eyes.

“NOW!” Qian Mengyu screamed as the cultivators of the Greencloud Pavilion instantly split in all directions. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng also dashed elsewhere to a random location.

“HAHAHA!” Shiki’s footsteps caused great tremors to shake the earth, and he leapt up into the air. With a howl of malevolence, a terrifying soundwave blasted out, as an illusory form of a savage lion appeared in the air.

Right before landing on the ground, his fist ruthlessly smashed out, containing tremendous strength behind it. Due to the earlier lion’s howl, a cultivator from Qian Mengyu’s group couldn’t react in time, and when she finally came to her senses, the fist of Shiki had already come into contact, bursting her head into pieces.

Simultaneously, those from the Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect all acted in tandem, wishing to cleanly slaughter

the cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng frantically dashed towards a random direction, only to see a group of cultivators from the Beast King Hall tracking their movements, following behind them with incredible speed.

Halting his steps, Qin Wentian's ancient halberd was already in his hands as a terrifying coldness flickered in his eyes.

“Wentian, take note of your Astral Energy consumption, the road to the celestial lake is still long,” Mo Qingcheng counselled, bringing Qin Wentian back to his senses. Mo Qingcheng's was right to warn him; he couldn't go all out so quickly, the road ahead was still long.

This was only just the beginning.

AGM 183 – Guardian

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng's speed was extremely fast. By this point they were already very far away from their earlier resting spot, with a total of five others pursuing them. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng continued dashing forwards, with no intentions of stopping, opting to conserve their strength.

A cold light glinted in the eyes of their pursuers. Their targets weren't losing out in the slightest when it came to speed, and seeing how they were split off from their own main group, it would only spell disaster to continue chasing after the two, especially if they were to meet any groups formed by the other powers.

“People from the Beast King Hall?” At this moment, a silhouette appeared ahead. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng slowed their steps, only to see that the new arrival was none other than Ouyang Kuangsheng.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, this matter has nothing to do with you.” By then, the five experts from the Beast King Hall had already surrounded Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Sweeping their gaze about, they finally relaxed when they saw that Ouyang Kuangsheng was acting alone, without the rest of his clan members.

But Ouyang Kuangsheng was really too self-confident, to think that he would opt to travel alone.

“Mmm.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed as he crossed his arms in

front of his chest, adopting the appearance that he was only there to watch the show.

A sharp glint of light flashed in the eyes of the leader of the five from the Beast King Hall, as an extremely chilly expression appeared on his face. “Kill the male.”

“Roger.” The robes of the four others fluttered as demonic qi emanated forth from their bodies. Two of them moved towards Qin Wentian, while the other two headed for Mo Qingcheng.

Qin Wentian’s ancient halberd was already in his hands, as a cold glint of demonic light flashed in his eyes, so cold it pervaded the bone. A demonic look replaced his earlier expression, and monstrous killing intent gushed out from him, fluttering his robes about in the air.

The two walking towards Qin Wentian attacked simultaneously. One of them struck out towards Qin Wentian, his hands transforming into the claws of an eagle, as an illusory form of an eagle appeared in midair. A terrifying demon-wind arose from the force of the attack, threatening to lacerate Qin Wentian’s body apart. The other cultivator blasted forwards with an explosive gigantic palm. In their eyes, Qin Wentian was already a dead man.

Swish~ A raging gust of wind blew as Qin Wentian slashed out tyrannically with his ancient halberd, aiming for the incoming eagle claw with a speed as fast as lightning. The terrifying energy within his strike caused the wind to howl, as an aura of sharpness could be felt emanating from it.

As sounds of piercing rang out, the ancient halberd ruptured the sharp eagle claws, penetrating through the entire arm of his opponent, right into his brain. At the same time, he raised his left hands, and executed the Falling Mountain Palms with a roar, directly matching palms with the gigantic demonic palms of his opponent. The impact from the collision creating a whirlwind storm with them standing at the centre. Only then did the opposing cultivator notice the coldness of Qin Wentian's eyes and was suddenly struck with a sense of terror.

Qin Wentian retreated slightly, sweeping out his ancient halberd in a horizontal arc, akin to the wing slash of a Vermillion Bird. His opponent could feel a monstrous sharpness bearing down on him. With a roar of rage, he blasted out with both his palms, trying to block the attack. Qin Wentian then spat out numerous rays of sword light, each manifesting into sharp swords. One by one, the swords pierced through the head of his opponent, slaughtering him with no mercy.

If one wanted to talk about combat, not many cultivators in the 9th level of Arterial Circulation could match up to Qin Wentian.

After killing them both, Qin Wentian turned his eyes to the leader. His silhouette flickered as he abruptly disappeared from sight. However, he didn't move in the direction of the leader but towards Mo Qingcheng instead. Bursting forth with indomitable strength, he stabbed his ancient halberd at the heads of his opponents.

Abruptly, a terrifying surge of demonic qi exploded forth. Qin

Wentian turned, only to see the previously motionless leader releasing all three of his Astral Souls. All of his Astral Souls shone with resplendent light, and were actually condensed from Demonic Beast Constellations! The leader slowly moved forwards to Qin Wentian, as a towering demonic qi permeated the air.

Awoooooo~ Ferocious howls thundered out, as Qin Wentian's eardrums shuddered from the impact. Immediately after, it was as if he saw a myriad of demonic beasts galloping towards him, seeking to devour him.

“Yuanfu level cultivator.” Qin Wentian's heart shook slightly for a second. From the aura his opponent released, Qin Wentian could sense two things: first, that the leader was exceptionally powerful even among Yuanfu cultivators; second, he wanted Qin Wentian's death with a single strike.

The leader also knew that his Yuanfu was sealed, which was why he chose to execute such a powerful innate technique requiring such a high consumption rate. He would rather kill Qin Wentian off with a single blow, rather than prolong the fight. After all, he noticed that Mo Qingcheng was also at the Yuanfu Realm.

Qin Wentian felt as though his eardrums were destroyed, and the galloping herd of demonic beasts gave him a tremendous sense of pressure. Qin Wentian's blood was boiling, as the demonic qi gushing out from his body increased in strength. Taking a step forwards, he transformed into a blurry shadow, and pushed forth his Fallen Star technique. The resulting unstoppable force collided directly with the innate technique of his opponent.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. The terrifying might of his opponent's blows were akin to typhoons blasting against his body. However, his current physique was already comparable to a demonic beast and had extremely high endurance. Moving as a blurry shadow, he continued pressing forwards with his ancient halberd without fear.

Rumble~ The terrifying counter-impact flung Qin Wentian's body backwards, the force of the blow so strong it took two massive trees to break his momentum. Groaning, he spat out a mouthful of blood, the demonic qi so abundant that the entire atmosphere turned oppressive. The body of the Yuanfu leader no longer moved, as the ancient halberd had gored through his throat. He died with his eyes wide open, never expecting that under the pressure of his strongest innate technique, Qin Wentian who should be in imminent peril, would still be able to fight back to such an extent.

Mo Qingcheng had also finished dealing with her opponents. Walking towards Qin Wentian, she retrieved a medicinal pill and placed it inside his mouth. Qin Wentian swallowed the pill as he regarded the nervous Mo Qingcheng, before smiling and reassuring her, "I'm alright."

Although he smiled, Qin Wentian couldn't allow himself to be the slightest bit complacent. The battle he had just faced, had opened his eyes to the dangers of these Refinement Grounds.

"Awesome." Ouyang Kuangsheng stared intently at Qin Wentian, admiring the beauty of the final strike he unleashed. Ouyang Kuangsheng knew that if he were the one facing the Yuanfu leader, he could have avoided injury, but unlike Qin Wentian, his own

Astral Energy consumption definitely would have been higher. The Refinement Grounds were akin to a life and death marathon; small injuries were fine as long as they didn't deplete too much of the Astral Energy stored within their bodies.

Qin Wentian naturally understood this logic, which was why he didn't mind suffering damage in exchange for his opponent's death, not to mention that he already knew Mo Qingcheng had some recovery pills and medicinal pellets on her.

Nodding to Ouyang Kuangsheng, Qin Wentian didn't continue the conversation.

"If we weren't in here right now, I would definitely have sought you out for an exchange of pointers, haha." Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed as he departed, planning to search for his party members.

In here, even if Ouyang Kuangsheng was extremely confident about his own prowess, there was no guarantee he'd survive by himself if he ran amok at the start of his journey in the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake.

It was considered 'safer' to go alone nearer to the end of the journey, after the strength of the other allied forces were reduced. After all, only seven spots were available, and in this place where danger lurked in all corners, history had proven that many outstanding talents would fall.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng left the area, too. After all, the area was strewn with corpses, so only after changing locations did

they sit down to regulate their conditions.

Qin Wentian passed a few Yuan Meteor Stones to Mo Qingcheng. In the Refinement Grounds, one could only replenish their own store of Astral Energy by depending on Yuan Meteor Stones.

However at this moment, sudden sounds of rustling rang out. Qin Wentian quickly turned his head towards the noise, his heart tightening.

“Oh Brother Qin, so it’s you.” Yi Xiang appeared, laughing as he approached. Qin Wentian discovered that Yi Xiang was with several others, looking as though he had already formed an alliance. The white-clad leader, with a handsome and delicate countenance, was none other than Mu Baifei, the swordsman from the Yan Continent.

“Isn’t Brother Qin together with those from the Greencloud Pavilion? Why are you injured?” Yi Xiang glanced at Mo Qingcheng as he inquired.

Although Yi Xiang was extremely cordial in nature, Qin Wentian still felt some misgivings towards him. He then nodded as he replied, “We ran into an ambush and were injured, as a result.”

“Without the Greencloud Pavilion, I’m afraid that it would be even more dangerous for Brother Qin and Miss Mo to travel alone. Tell you what, I’ll help to intercede on your behalf, so why not join our alliance?” Yi Xiang remarked.

Qin Wentian contemplated, glancing at Mo Qingcheng, but eventually agreed. Even if he had no care for himself, he wouldn't selfishly allow Mo Qingcheng to be in danger because of his lack of power. Travelling alone, with everyone else forming alliances, would indeed be a foolhardy decision.

“Don't worry, since we have an affinity, leave this to me,” Yi Xiang heroically spoke, as he ran towards Mu Baifei, conversing with him before waving his hands to signal for Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng to come over.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng went over, There were 18 people in this alliance, which could be considered quite huge in terms of numbers. However, it was clear to Qin Wentian that this was merely the start of the Refinement Grounds' trials; for now, joining a powerful alliance equated to safety. But when the end of the journey is nigh, alliances would definitely collapse once people fought against each other.

There were a total of three, including Mu Baifei, who were all Swallow Swordsmen. They all carried ancient swords strapped to their backs and appeared extremely full of pride, even refusing to cast a glance at Qin Wentian. To them, these people who joined their alliance were of no value. This alliance was formed solely because of convenience; the others were also clear about this point and thus tolerated their attitudes. After all, the Swallow Swordsmen's name and reputation was also exceedingly famous in the Nine Continents.

With such a powerful alliance, they didn't really meet any dangers along the way, however occasionally they would come across the corpses of other cultivators sprawled around the Refinement Grounds.

After two days, they finally exited the Forest of Hallucination. Upon leaving, numerous pathways appeared in front of them, each separated by towering mountain peaks.

“Who will be the scouts?” a Swallow Swordsman standing at the side of Mu Baifei inquired. His tone of voice was cool and indifferent, sounding as though he was above the rest.

“Brother Qin, we would have to trouble you then.” Yi Xiang smiled at Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian stared at Yi Xiang, his eyes narrowed for an instant before returning back to normal.

“Don't worry, Brother Qin, these two shall accompany you, and we'll immediately rush over if there's an ambush.” Yi Xiang pointed to two others by his side as he spoke, causing them to frown as well.

“Fine.” Qin Wentian agreed.

“I'll go with you.” Mo Qingcheng stepped forwards, standing beside Qin Wentian.

“Oh, we don’t need that many people to scout.” Yi Xiang laughed. Qin Wentian turned his head back, glancing coldly at him before holding onto Mo Qingcheng’s hands, walking forwards with no regards for those behind him.

Qin Wentian had no wish to stay in this alliance any longer. Upon seeing this, Yi Xiang’s eyes narrowed as a cold sinister light flickered within.

“Yi Xiang, what the hell are you thinking?” the female cultivator stated unhappily; she had travelled beside him on their way here. She had also seen Mo Qingcheng’s true countenance earlier. Considering Yi Xiang’s actions of asking Qin Wentian to scout ahead while retaining Mo Qingcheng, it would be very hard for people not to jump to conclusions.

.....

Within the Celestial Lake Palace, inside a quiet hall, an extremely bewitching-looking woman sat upon a jade throne. Traces of cold intent could be seen in her clear eyes, her demeanor appearing as majestic as a queen.

Her beautiful eyes were staring straight ahead, upon which numerous screens were arranged. Each screen showcased various scenarios currently playing out within the Refinement Grounds.

Two figures stood at the side of the captivating queen. One was the Palace Mistress of the Celestial Lake Palace, while the other was an extremely ice cold ephemeral beauty that didn’t seem to be

from the mortal world. The aura she projected was somewhat similar to the captivating queen sitting on the jade throne.

At this moment, the cold gaze of the queen was staring at Qin Wentian. This youth, Qin Wentian, was said to come from Chu.

The Chu Country, back when the Azure Emperor had disappeared, the Azure Emperor Palace was faced with an imminent crisis. Countless gazes filled with greed locked onto the Azure Emperor Palace, and each and everyone of their members were under close scrutinisation. However, none of the overlords from the other transcendent powers found what they were seeking.

It was only recently that the constant surveillance had ceased after a piece of news had spread, claiming that prior to the Azure Emperor's passing, he had gone to a place called Chu.

At this moment, the corners of the cold bewitching queen's lips curled up into an unpleasant smile. Did those foolish fellows thought that they could find what the Azure Emperor had left behind? So what if they found the secret map? What use was there? There was still her standing guard, defending the final checkpoint!

"Will a new Emperor be born from the Azure Emperor Palace?" the queen murmured. Standing beside her, the Palace Mistress involuntarily shivered. However, the ephemeral beauty was unfazed, and without a single change in expression, as if her aloof and indifferent appearance would always remain as such!

AGM 184 – Monument Of [Yellow Springs](#)

黄泉 → Yellow Springs (the underworld/hell of chinese mythology)

Choosing an ancient path at random, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng proceeded on their way. To their surprise, the journey was smooth and they encountered no difficulties.

After embarking on the pathway for a while, they discovered that the many pathways ahead eventually congregated together, forming a broad main road. Further up ahead, they saw several cultivators already standing there, with their gazes turned forward.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, no wonder the journey through this pathway was so smooth.” Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng halted their steps right where the various pathways congregated. Shifting their gazes ahead, they could see the corpses of several other cultivators strewn about, dying the ground a bloody red.

BOOM. Suddenly, Qin Wentian felt the blood within his body pulsing intensely, causing him to be alarmed. Inclining his head, he saw that further along was a stone monument with the words ‘Yellow Springs’ inscribed upon them. The monument floated in the air about 10 metres from the ground.

“How strange.” Mo Qingcheng, too, could feel the blood pulsing in her body, causing her heart to tremble.

This time around, the test was set within the ancient pathway of the Yellow Springs. As the Buddhist saying went: Coming face to

face with the Yellow Springs, only with Buddhist's enlightenment is one allowed to shed the abyss of worldly suffering. Only by turning back will you be able to see the shore (Repent and you shall be saved).

Rumour has it that if one came face to face with the Yellow Springs' ancient pathway during the Celestial Lake Palace test, one must definitely turn back to seek out other paths. Many of the other cultivators had unsightly expressions upon their faces; since from the start all the various paths eventually congregated here, this meant that each and every cultivator entering the Refinement Grounds of the Celestial Lake Palace would end up here as well.

If one didn't dare to proceed forwards, they could turn back (repent and see the shore), and other pathways will open for them. This was the meaning behind the Buddhist saying from earlier. However, if one dared to proceed through the Yellow Springs' pathway, that would undoubtedly lead to a shortcut.

"I just don't believe that the Yellow Springs pathway is as fearsome as the rumors described," an unknown person stated hesitantly. After which, he stepped forwards, choosing to enter the pathway, yet doing so with extreme caution.

BOOM. The blood within his entire body pulsed, as he felt the intensity of the surging of his blood explosively increase.

Taking another step forward, his countenance turned ashen as his blood vessels could be seen popping out and protruding all over his body.

Releasing his Astral Souls, the Astral Light shrouded his body in a protective radiance. He gritted his teeth and continued slowly making his way forward.

BOOM. The pulsating of his blood caused his heartbeat to escalate. His entire countenance was covered in a bloody shade of red, as terror painted over his features. Booming sounds rang out as his heart pounded wildly.

“Retreat.” A notion of thought appeared in his mind, as he retreated with crazy speed. However, the pulsing of his blood became more alarming in intensity, eventually culminating in a bloodcurdling screech. The other cultivators only saw his blood vessels erupting, and like a fountain his blood sprayed out, falling like rain from the clouds. His heart was the last to explode and what was left of him, was only a bloody pulpy mess.

“Let us turn back,” Jiang Ting, who was beside Ouyang Kuangsheng, spoke out.

“Encountering the Yellow Springs is a rare opportunity, if we are able to get past this, we will definitely reach the celestial lake. I want to give it a try.” As he stepped forwards, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s heroism reached to the clouds. Jiang Ting’s countenance changed as she quickly said persuasively, “Kuangsheng, do not act on impulse.”

“Jiang Ting, if you all want to turn back, you guys go on ahead without me.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed out loud as he

continued forwards. Similar to before, the intensity of his blood pulsing heightened, and his heartbeat escalated.

It was as though a gale of raging wind gusted over the ancient pathway. Ouyang Kuangsheng's blood seethed, but his steps were filled with an unbreakable determination, projecting an aura of courage as he advanced.

So what of it, if he were to face the Yellow Springs? Since he had already decided to enter, he would never turn back. Even if he ended up dying, so be it.

Those from the Ouyang and Jiang Clan were all extremely nervous as they locked their gazes upon this youth so blessed with unsurpassed talent. The weakness of Ouyang Kuangsheng was that he was too impulsive, and all consequences be damned. As long as he set his mind upon something, his will would never waver, regardless of what others said or did. Even if this pathway of the Yellow Springs led to hell, he would still be determined to walk on it.

Coming face to face with the Yellow Springs, repent and you shall be saved, yet he stubbornly refused to turn back.

"If I meet my end here, go find someone better." Ouyang Kuangsheng had already advanced his way beneath the Yellow Springs Monument. His resolute expression remained unchanged, his long hair danced about in the wind, seeming as though he had no other concerns in the world.

Jiang Ting's heart pounded madly from his behavior. Ouyang Kuangsheng halted his steps and released his Astral Souls. Watching his movements, her heart leapt to her throat, only to see a few moments later Ouyang Kuangsheng continue to slowly advance, as though every step he took was a remarkably challenging feat.

Gradually, Ouyang Kuangsheng's position got further and further from the Yellow Springs Monument. With visible effort, he turned his body as he smiled at Jiang Ting and the others, "Go."

Jiang Ting and the rest, could only nod heavily in agreement.

"What should we do?" Mo Qingcheng looked towards Qin Wentian.

"I wish to give it a try as well." Qin Wentian gazed at Mo Qingcheng, startling her with his answer. However, she recovered swiftly and with a laugh said, "Then I shall accompany you."

"No, wait for me here. If I'm unable to persist, I will return." Qin Wentian gently pinched Mo Qingcheng's nose as he smiled. He didn't want Mo Qingcheng to be too worried.

"Okay..." Mo Qingcheng nodded. Qin Wentian turned about and proceeded to head towards the Yellow Spring Monument. His heartbeat escalated as his blood seethed and surged. As for why Qin Wentian wanted to attempt this was due to the pressure emanating from the Yellow Springs pathway; he could feel the power of his own bloodline throbbing in resonance. Such a

sensation made him thirst for more.

As his blood rushed through him with greater intensity, his heartbeat pounded frantically. He didn't realize that behind him, Mo Qingcheng had actually took a few steps forwards.

Qin Wentian could faintly sense that he was unable to control the power of his Bloodline Limit for much longer. That outpouring of energy soared, as his hair turned inky black, whisked about by the wind. As the roaring sound of rushing blood became increasingly louder, he could feel the countless streams of energy within its flow.

Finally, he arrived at the point below the Yellow Springs Monument. Halting his steps, he closed his eyes as he turned his perception inwards within his body. It was as though there was a blood-colored seal jumping about in excitement. And from the aura emitted from the blood seal, he could sense the terrifying amounts of energy contained within.

“Is this the physical materialization of the Bloodline Limit?” Qin Wentian's heart was trembling. To think that he had actually managed to sense the reason for the resonance of his bloodline. He had a faint feeling that from now on, he could freely control this source of energy, integrating it into his attacks.

Was this a breakthrough? An advancement in the leveling up of his bloodline.

Inclining his head, Qin Wentian's vision turned blood red, as a

tyrannical pressure gushed forth, so massive it felt as though it could reach the heavens. His was a Monarch-level bloodline, how would this mere monument be able to faze it?

Countless blood-colored imprints rose up into the air, flying towards the Yellow Springs Monuments. In that instant, the monument glowed with a resplendent crimson light, shaking as it flew towards Qin Wentian, as though the two forces were having a confrontation.

Mo Qingcheng turned pale white as she witnessed the scene, nervous to such a degree her heart felt strangled. She bit down on her lips until fresh blood flowed, taking yet another step forwards against the tremendous pressure.

At this moment, Qin Wentian still had no awareness of Mo Qingcheng's actions. The imprints originating from his blood seal smashed towards the stone monument, and the monument's speed gradually slowed as the once resplendent crimson light turned dull.

Mo Qingcheng felt the sense of pressure growing weaker and weaker, and upon raising her head, she saw the monument fall from the air to land in front of Qin Wentian, as pressure no longer emanated from it.

“What, my bloodline can actually control this monument?” Wonder appeared on Qin Wentian's face. He felt that he had somehow formed a connection, binding him with the Yellow Springs Monument. Very quickly, Qin Wentian deposited the monument into his interspatial ring.

The alluring eyes of Mo Qingcheng flickered. “This...”

Ouyang Kuangsheng had turned to witness the confrontation, so stunned he remained rooted to the spot. Qin Wentian had actually subdued the Yellow Springs Monument?

Qin Wentian calmed the power of his Bloodline Limit, returning to Mo Qingcheng’s side. He saw the traces of blood and bite marks on her lips, and he felt incomparably touched knowing that she had stepped onto the Yellow Springs pathway out of worry for him.

“Silly girl.” Qin Wentian cupped Mo Qingcheng’s face with his hands. Mo Qingcheng beamed with a sweet smile as she replied, “Let’s be on our way.”

“Okay.” Qin Wentian nodded in agreement. However the very next moment, sounds of footsteps rang out as a few silhouettes appeared, coming out from one of the various pathways. Amazement was etched on the faces of the new arrivals upon seeing both Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng.

“You’re alright?” Qian Mengyu asked in astonishment, she had initially thought that with how things had turned out earlier, Qin Wentian would surely have been finished.

“My luck is pretty good.” Qin Wentian smiled. “We are on our way, do you want to go together?”

Glancing at the three others behind Qian Mengyu, Qin Wentian sighed silently. It seemed like they had suffered many casualties, to think that they were only left with four people.

“Fine.” Qian Mengyu agreed, as they both proceeded ahead. After several moments on the pathway, apprehension and vigilance could be seen in their eyes when they saw Ouyang Kuangsheng standing amidst a sea of corpses.

Upon noticing them, Ouyang Kuangsheng could only smile bitterly. Those that exited the Yellow Springs pathway would certainly be able to enter the celestial lake. However, the test earlier was ‘spoiled’ by a freak that had caused the entire Yellow Springs pathway to vanish. This meant that for later cultivators, there would be no test to obstruct their way. No one else would know that this test had ever existed.

Turning, Ouyang Kuangsheng no longer bothered with them as he sped forwards, hoping to be one of the first few to step into the celestial lake.

Qin Wentian and his party members also sped up, following closely behind Ouyang Kuangsheng, and all of them eventually exited this ancient pathway.

Those from the Greencloud Pavilion intentionally pulled Qian Mengyu back from following Qin Wentian and Ouyang Kuangsheng, widening the gap between them. Their actions caused Qian Mengyu to stiffen slightly, but she soon understood

the meaning behind it. They were afraid that Ouyang Kuangsheng might launch a sneak attack.

After Ouyang Kuangsheng and Qin Wentian exited the ancient path, the first thing they saw were a pair of ancient trees, each standing at both sides of the road. Dazzling starlight could be seen flowing from the branches of the trees, originating from its fruits.

“Haha, light at the end of the tunnel, indeed.” Ouyang Kuangsheng instantly sprinted towards one of the trees as he leapt upwards and began rapidly plucking the fruits.

Qin Wentian locked eyes with Mo Qingcheng, as they sprinted towards the other tree to pluck its fruits. Their speed was amazingly quick so by the time Qian Mengyu and her company arrived, about half the fruits had already been plucked clean.

“Stellar Fruits.” Those from the Greencloud Pavilion were thunderstruck, as they, too, hurriedly sprinted towards the ancient trees.

“What are the use of these Stellar Fruits?” Qin Wentian looked towards Qian Mengyu as she asked.

“The Stellar Fruits are only useful in this spatial dimension; eating it will replenish one’s Astral Energy, and could be considered an extremely useful treasure inside the Refinement Grounds.” Ouyang Kuangsheng explained. He had already harvested all the fruits from the tree he’d run to.

Qin Wentian's eyes brightened as he shifted his gaze to those from the Greencloud Pavilion. "There're plenty of fruits here, let's split them equally according to our number of people."

"Why must we split them equally?" A female cultivator standing next to Qian Mengyu questioned, a sharp light glinting in her eyes.

Qin Wentian's eyes turned frosty as he stared at the female cultivator, "What do you mean?"

"We allowed you to tag along and this could already be considered us taking care of you. Naturally, it will be up to us to decide how the fruits should be split. But don't worry, you will surely get your share," the female cultivator coldly stated, contempt apparent in her tone. This fellow was truly indulging in his own wild fantasies, he actually wanted to split the fruits equally?

From her point of view, the fact that they allowed Qin Wentian to follow them earlier was already a kindness bestowed to him by their Greencloud Pavilion. If it were not for them blocking the combined assault by the Beast King Hall and the Skydemon Sect back then, Qin Wentian would have already died.

"So, you mean that the fruits won't be split equally?" Qin Wentian's voice got colder by several degrees. He was the first to obtain the Stellar Fruits, and also the one who suggested the equal split. However, it appeared that those from the Greencloud Pavilion didn't appreciate this kindness, and on the contrary, they still felt that he was too greedy.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was similarly dumbstruck, but soon after, an expression of interest appeared on his face. They took care of Qin Wentian? Forming an alliance was originally of mutual benefit to all parties and they would naturally face incoming danger together. But from the tone of her words, it was as though allowing Qin Wentian to join them was an act of charity on their part.

“Brother Qin, even if you want to split, you should be splitting the fruits with us.” At this moment, another row of silhouettes appeared by the ancient path’s exit. These new arrivals were none other than Mu Baifei and the others. The one who spoke was Yi Xiang, as his eyes narrowed, looking at Qin Wentian. Naturally, it went without saying how important the Stellar Fruits were within the Refinement Grounds.

Qin Wentian glanced at Yi Xiang, Mu Baifei and the rest of the members from his earlier alliance. There wasn’t a single kind soul amongst this group of people, indeed.

AGM 185 – Vying Over

Qin Wentian frowned upon hearing the words spoken from the female cultivator of the Greencloud Pavilion. In any case, he wasn't that familiar with their group, he was merely acquainted with Qian Mengyu.

“What do you think?” Qin Wentian asked, as he directed his gaze at Qian Mengyu.

“Miss Mengyu, this man here received our care earlier, and based on logic, by right we should decide how to split the Stellar Fruits. Not only that...” The female cultivator cast a glance at Mu Baifei and his party members. The way these new arrivals looked at the Stellar Fruits were akin to a tiger looking at its prey.

With sufficient Stellar Fruits in their hands, even if they didn't have the advantage in numbers, those from the Greencloud Pavilion would be able to go all out in utilising their Yuanfu-level innate technique, regardless of the consumption rate. They had no need to fear Mu Baifei and his party at all.

Qian Mengyu's brows were knitted, and as she locked eyes with Qin Wentian, she intoned in a low voice, “Forget it, since we are acquaintances, let's split the fruits equally.”

Qian Mengyu didn't wish to haggle so much, after all they had four people, and Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were only two. Even if they split the Stellar Fruits equally, the Greencloud Pavilion group would still get more.

Maybe, in Qian Mengyu's heart, she did indeed think that Greencloud Pavilion should decide the split. After all, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were at a disadvantage in comparison. If it were any other cultivator instead of Qin Wentian, she would have definitely gone all out to kill them and then plundered the Stellar Fruits.

Qin Wentian was no longer as naive as he used to be. Upon hearing Qian Mengyu's words, he could already guess her thoughts. However at that moment, the female cultivator beside Qian Mengyu interjected, "No way, Miss, now that there are external enemies, if we still split the fruits equally with them, wouldn't that mean we are just giving the Stellar Fruits away? Don't tell me that you're hoping for them to clash against Mu Baifei and his party."

The female cultivator could also be considered a beauty; her looks were delicate and exquisitely formed but seeing her current expression, Qin Wentian felt nothing but disgust.

With a few Stellar Fruits in his hands, Qin Wentian walked forwards to hand them over to Qian Mengyu. "Don't worry, we won't implicate your Greencloud Pavilion. As for these fruits, consider them my gift to you."

After speaking, he turned his gaze towards the other three cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion, coldly remarking, "Since you are all so adamant about splitting the Stellar Fruits, on what grounds do you have that I must split them with you? I was the one to obtain these fruits, if you wish to try and snatch them, bring it

on.”

Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng away, his anger was obvious to all.

“You ungrateful bastard, forgetting our earlier help the moment you find treasure. If not for us, would you even still be alive?” Killing intent flashed in the eyes of the female cultivator as she pointed her finger straight at Qin Wentian, her rage boiling to the max. Qin Wentian was too impudent.

“Shut your mouth,” Qin Wentian coldly replied, “Earlier, when we were surrounded, the two of us drew away five cultivators. In the end, we finished them off ourselves, when did your Greencloud Pavilion ever protect us?”

“Hehe, Brother Qin hold on. First off, why don’t you temporarily put aside your underlying issues with the Greencloud Pavilion? Back then you entered into our alliance based on my introduction, and now that you have the Stellar Fruits, shouldn’t you pass them to us?” Yi Xiang was smiling coldly. The moment these cultivators saw a treasure, they could no longer hold back their greed. After all, no one knew what else might happen in future in the Refinement Grounds. It would always be better to have the Stellar Fruits at hand to replenish their energy.

Qin Wentian saw Ouyang Kuangsheng leisurely standing to the side, as though watching a show. Despite the fact that Ouyang Kuangsheng had a large amount of the Stellar Fruits on him, no one tried to bother him. The other cultivators all chose to target Qin Wentian instead, apparently thinking he was easier to bully.

“You think too much, I applaud your imagination.” Qin Wentian cast a glance at Yi Xiang, as he continued walking away with Mo Qingcheng.

“Hehe, hand over all the Stellar Fruits on you right now,” a Swallow Swordsman spoke calmly. He walked away from Mu Baifei’s side, directing his stare at Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng, as well as those from the Greencloud Pavilion. There was an inherent arrogance in his eyes, considering everyone else to be beneath him.

“Let’s go.” Qin Wentian held onto Mo Qingcheng’s hands as they sprinted forwards, not wanting to waste their time with these people.

“Let us leave, as well,” Qian Mengyu spoke, as her party members similarly sprinted forwards. The Swallow Swordsman laughed coldly as he directed his alliance to run after them.

Ouyang Kuangsheng had an expression of interest reflected on his countenance. It was said that every time the Stellar Fruits appeared, a dispute would surely take place. In the eyes of everyone, the Stellar Fruits were a treasure, but was its existence not a disaster, instead? Or maybe, the Stellar Fruits themselves were also another kind of test.

At this moment, turning his head back, Ouyang Kuangsheng saw several silhouettes sprinting towards his direction. He saw cultivators from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, and even Wang Clan cultivators from the War Continent. It seemed like this

time round the dispute would be extremely exciting to watch.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng.” The few cultivators from the Wang Clan halted their steps, as Wang Xiao, who was in the lead, swept his gaze over to Ouyang Kuangsheng. Taking note of the tree’s appearance, a sharp glint of light flashed in his eyes. “You obtained the Stellar Fruits?”

Ouyang Kuangsheng glanced at Wang Xiao. He knew that if this fellow were to truly attack in a frenzy, everyone would definitely fear him to some degree. Not bothering to reply, Ouyang Kuangsheng’s lips curled up into a cold smile as he too, sprinted ahead.

On the spacious pathway, cultivator after cultivator dashed madly ahead. Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were currently leading, but their countenances soon became worried.

A gigantic, towering mountain rampart came into view, its peak so tall that it seemed to touch the clouds. There was only a single pathway through its middle. At the moment, that pathway seemed to release a powerful force of suction, as hurricanes howled, lacerating the space within. It seemed extremely terrifying.

Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng halted their steps, their countenances extremely unsightly as they stared at the towering mountain rampart in front of them.

“Qingcheng, take these. Be careful.” Qin Wentian retrieved a few Stellar Fruits, passing them over to Mo Qingcheng. She lightly

nodded, as they both turned only to see the clouds of dust kicked up by the cultivators approaching in a rush. The Greencloud Pavilion cultivators were one of the first few to arrive, and as they saw the towering mountain ahead of them, the expression on their faces became exceedingly ugly to behold.

Since there was actually a mountain rampart blocking their path, they wouldn't be able to avoid the dispute. And as for those who possessed the Stellar Fruits, they would surely be the target for others.

Mu Baifei and his alliance also arrived, however they weren't in a hurry to make their move. They also realised that there were still many others behind them.

Several moments later, the rest of the cultivators all arrived at the mountain rampart. Each cultivator stood about randomly, their ulterior motives apparent on their faces.

Ouyang Kuangsheng cast a glance at the crowd, before shifting his gaze back onto Qin Wentian. This matter had become so troublesome, and was all because of Qin Wentian. If it weren't for him subduing the Yellow Springs Monument, the vast majority of the current crowd would never have made it this far.

“Qian Mengyu from the Greencloud Pavilion. Turn the fruits over, with your strength, there's no way you could hold onto them.” Mu Baifei took a step forwards, staring at Qian Mengyu. A condescending tone could be heard in his voice as he and the two other Swallow Swordsmen drew their swords. At that instant, a monstrously sharp sword Qi could be felt tearing apart space,

gushing towards the four cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion.

“Try it.” Qian Mengyu’s countenance was exceedingly unpleasant to behold.

Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen advanced as the monstrous sword Qi increased in strength. A suffocating sword intent permeated the air as their Astral Souls were released, inundating the area with a dazzling light.

The Swallow Swordsmen naturally condensed Sword-type Astral Souls. The three of them stood shoulder to shoulder, pointing their fingers forward. An instant later, tens of millions of sharp swords materialized into a roiling tempest of flying blades. The tempest howled furiously, seeking to decimate all that blocked their path.

“What a powerful sword Qi.” The crowd gasped in awe.

At this moment, a long sword could also be seen in Qian Mengyu’s hands; she was proficient with the Sword-type innate technique, Sword of Nine Lives. Wielding the sword in an intricate dance, it contained overflowing vitality and an undying will. At that instant, the female cultivators beside her also unleashed their attacks, all of them combining their powers together, seeking to clash directly with the oncoming sword tempest.

Swish, swish, swish. The terrifying sword Qi emanated by both sides was exceptionally ear-piercing, as the combatants were engulfed in a storm of swords. The Swallow Swordsmen continued

their advances, as boundless amounts of sword Qi gushed forth with every step they took. They flicked their sword fingers out unceasingly, layering their terrifying sword intent, stacking over each other, becoming increasingly stronger.

Qin Wentian stood witnessing their battle, silently musing that they were indeed Swordsmen that hailed from transcendent powers. Any one of the three was sufficient to dominate anyone who had participated in the Jun Lin Banquet, including himself from back then. However as of now, Qin Wentian didn't feel that he was weaker compared to them.

The current Qin Wentian versus the previous Qin Wentian; who knew how many times stronger he was now in comparison to back then.

“Brother Qin, you can witness for yourself exactly how strong the Swallow Swordsmen are. A wise man submits to his circumstances, we won't hold it against you if you hand over the fruits now.” Yi Xiang walked forwards, standing in front of Qin Wentian as he spoke in a low voice, with a vile smile painted on his face.

Qin Wentian cast a glance at Yi Xiang, his reply was only a single word, “Scram.”

Yi Xiang's countenance sank, as his demeanor became sinister. Glaring at Qin Wentian before glancing at Mo Qingcheng, he stated, “Brother Qin, it's okay if you wish to die, but why must you drag down such a beautiful girl with you?”

Qin Wentian stared at Yi Xiang, an icy cold glint of light could be seen flickering in his eyes, causing Yi Xiang to be filled with a sense of danger. That harmonious looking youth was actually capable of bringing forth such pressure when angered.

“We will hand the fruits over.” At this very moment, on the battlefield some distance away, Qian Mengyu and her party members were forced all the way to the mountain rampart by the three Swallow Swordsmen. With their backs to the mountain wall, with no further paths of retreat, and in addition to the ever strengthening sword Qi, those from the Greencloud Pavilion could only obediently submit and hand over the Stellar Fruits in their possession.

“Puchi~ Fresh blood spurted out, as a female cultivator behind Qian Mengyu was run through by a sword, dying on the spot. Qian Mengyu stiffened, as her countenance became incomparably unsightly.

And at the same time, the monstrous sword intent dissipated as Mu Baifei calmly stated, “Since you already knew the result would turn out like this, why did you still resist in the first place?”

His voice was heavily tinged with arrogance as he stretched out his hands towards Qian Mengyu.

Qian Mengyu turned ashen as she handed the Stellar Fruits over. Only now did the crowd know the dispute was over vying of the Stellar Fruits.

“That’s all? The amount of Stellar Fruits can’t be so few, right?” Mu Baifei serenely spoke. After which, one of the female cultivators raised her hands, pointing her finger towards Qin Wentian, “The remaining fruits are all in his hands, while the entire hoard of Stellar Fruits of the other tree is in Ouyang Kuangsheng’s possession. Go snatch them if you have the ability to.”

Qin Wentian furrowed his brows as he saw Mu Baifei walking towards him. Just as serenely as before, Mu Baifei asked, “Where are the Stellar Fruits?”

His eyes were filled with disdain, staring condescendingly down at Qin Wentian. How could the amount of Stellar Fruits he obtained be sufficient to split with those in his alliance.

“Hehe, Brother Qin, if you infuriate Brother Mu, I’m afraid that you won’t be able to keep your little life.” Yi Xiang snickered, with a hint of intimidation.

“My life? Do you believe I won’t take your life first?” The demonic look in Qin Wentian’s eyes got more and more pronounced, his incomparably calm voice caused Yi Xiang’s countenance to freeze, and his expression became increasingly unsightly.

“He should have several Stellar Fruits in his possession, you guys go ahead and split them amongst yourselves,” Mu Baifei spoke to those in his alliance, causing their eyes to glimmer with greed.

It was very obvious Mu Baifei fully understood the current situation. He was not the only one that wanted the Stellar Fruits; there were still many others from the various transcendent powers eyeing the fruits akin to tigers watching their prey. The strength of his alliance was still insufficient to possess this entire batch of treasures alone.

Not only that, with his pride and arrogance, he felt that it was beneath his dignity to act against a nameless someone with no backing whatsoever.

AGM 186 – Mystic Moon Hall

Yi Xiang and one other, stared down Qin Wentian, stepping out to walk towards him.

“Brother Qin, you’re the one who can’t appreciate a favor. Don’t blame us,” Yi Xiang spoke indifferently, his killing intent radiating outwards. He truly wanted to see Qin Wentian, an ignorant person hailing from a small country, what capabilities did he have indeed to be this arrogant? Qin Wentian didn’t even know of the Ouyang Aristocrat Clan or any of the other transcendent powers. What were his origins, exactly?

Buzz~ Yi Xiang and the others made their moves, releasing their Astral Souls.

Qin Wentian’s countenance was extremely cold . How could there be such a logic stating he had to hand over the Stellar Fruits after obtaining them. His long hair was fluttering about in the wind, as demonic Qi emanated forth. All the blood in his body seethed, as the blood seal jumped about in a frenzy, containing an incredible power within.

“DIE.” The pressure their opponents emitted came smashing down on them. Yi Xiang and one other dashed towards them, attacking with wild abandon. Mo Qingcheng wanted to counter their attacks, but stopped when Qin Wentian replied, “Leave this to me.”

As the sound of his voice faded, his silhouette transformed into a

blur of shadows, instantly appearing before the two opponents as he unleashed a terrifying palm imprint.

4th Stance of the Thousand-Hand Imprints – Kuji Imprint

As the Kuji Imprint burst forth, a sense of overwhelming desolation filled the atmosphere, where nothing existed. The power behind the imprint was intent on eradicating everything in its path. Not only that, the gigantic palm's terrifying manifestation also retained an incomparable sharpness of sword intent. Qin Wentian had executed the Kuji Imprint with the sword-type Divine Yuan Energy in his body.

The expressions of the two attackers froze on their faces; the might of the gigantic palm imprint they sensed contained a pressure so stifling, they couldn't even breathe. It was as though the Kuji Imprint was the only thing that existed in this entire world, sweeping forwards with unstoppable force.

The crowd felt terror in their hearts upon seeing the palm imprint of Qin Wentian. It was unfathomably astonishing as to the depth of power it held; it radiated a bloody sheen and the aura of an Emperor could be felt within .

Since Yi Xiang and the other attacker had no way to retreat, they could only summon all their strength to defend against Qin Wentian's palm attack. As a thunderous sound echoed out, both Yi Xiang and the other attacker's arms instantly shattered. Horror filled their eyes as the Kuji Imprint devoured them whole. The pressure of overwhelming desolation smashed their bodies into pieces, before grinding the pieces into dust. No trace of their

corpses remained.

“How powerful.”

The countenance of everyone in the crowd froze as they stared at Qin Wentian. They could tell that the earlier palm imprint was at least a middle-tier, earth-grade innate technique. The pressure released was capable of overwhelming destruction; Yi Xiang and the other attacker died before they had a chance to use their trump cards.

The lone youth stood there, his hair an inky black. His aura was incredibly fiendish and demonic Qi was gushing out from him as it grew stronger and stronger by the second. The blood in his body surged and seethed, as he projected an aura of such absolute obedience it seemed as though even kings and emperors had to submit to him.

Currently, he was still young, but if he were to mature in strength, the domineering force behind his aura of absolute obedience would intensify even further. The power of his bloodline limit had definitely come from an exalted and extraordinary lineage.

Expressions of extreme fascination appeared on the faces of Qian Mengyu and those from the Greencloud Pavilion. Qian Mengyu silently mused in her heart, it seemed like she had still underestimated the combat prowess of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt energized by the power of his bloodline limit,

sensing the blood seal within his body jumping in a frenzy. This power would seep into his attacks, further enhancing their might to another level.

“So what if you guys managed to obtain the Stellar Fruits? Are all of you blind? Do you think the Swallow Swordsmen would lead you to the celestial lake? Can you clearly not see how many other experts are standing behind you?” Qin Wentian swept his gaze towards those in the Yi Xiang’s alliance. Upon hearing his words, their countenance stiffened as they looked behind, their hearts filled with trepidation.

“Without sufficient power, being a follower of others is equivalent to travelling alone. Only death awaits you at the end of the road.” At the end of his sentence, the ancient halberd appeared in Qin Wentian’s hands, slamming its tip into the ground as if to further emphasize his words.

“What wild words. Mere pretentious bravado.”

Mu Baifei indifferently snorted at Qin Wentian’s speech. His white robes fluttered as his sword Qi propagated, his eyes boring into Qin Wentian’s.

“Take him down,” Mu Baifei commanded, contempt heavily coloring his tone while his countenance still remained as serene as before.

The two other swordsmen from the Yan Continent nodded, and released their Astral Souls. In unison, they walked towards Qin

Wentian, their sword fingers marking him as their target.

Qin Wentian stared coldly at the two Swallow Swordsmen, similarly walking towards them with the ancient halberd equipped in his hands. With every step he took, the demonic aura he released grew stronger and stronger. His eyes resembled tunnels of endless depths, so deep a person could drown in them should they dare to meet his gaze.

The two white-clad swordsmen stabbed out with their sword fingers, as tremendous amounts of sword Qi swirled about, lacerating the void as tens of millions filaments of sword light bloomed.

Qin Wentian weaved the ancient halberd in beautiful arcs, as an illusory form of a towering Xuanwu Tortoise appeared, immovable even in the presence of his opponent's sword Qi.

“Hmph.” The two Swallow Swordsmen laughed coldly. Flicking their fingers, two exceptionally sharp swords materialized from above the defending phantom, chopping downwards to tear the illusory Xuanwu Tortoise apart.

The blood seal within his body trembled; the power of his bloodline limit seeping into his innate techniques caused the defense of the illusory Xuanwu manifestation to be overwhelmingly strong. Qin Wentian took another step forwards, his aura directly clashed against the overflowing sword might, counter-pressuring his opponents.

The two Swallow Swordsmen snorted with indifference, as they too, took a step forwards. Sweeping their sword fingers out in a horizontal slash, their energy input caused the filaments of sword light to grow even stronger and more resplendent.

At that instant, Qin Wentian dashed forth, smashing his ancient halberd forwards. The illusory form of the towering Xuanwu howled in rage as it rushed out; the abundant amount of blood light erupting outwards covered the entire space, acting as a barrier against the overflowing sword Qi. The ancient halberd in Qin Wentian's hands transformed into a dazzling stream of light, breaking apart all that obstructed his way.

The two swordsmen retracted their sword fingers while unsheathing their physical swords. This was the first time they had taken their swords out of their scabbards, the silvery glow reflected off their swords was extremely blinding, causing pain to the eyes of those who saw it.

The two swords simultaneously slashed out, clashing directly against the incoming ancient halberd of Qin Wentian. The power gushing forth from the ancient halberd subdued the terrifying bursts of sword Qi, seemingly groaning under its pressure before dissipating. The two Swallow Swordsmen were forced backwards from the impact, their countenance incomparably unsightly. The power contained within Qin Wentian's attack was immeasurably formidable.

Despite this, they instantly recovered their stances, dancing about with their swords. The faltering sword Qi grew increasingly stronger, as they both transformed into two streams of lights,

explosively dashing towards Qin Wentian.

Casting a glance at the ancient halberd of Qin Wentian, Mu Baifei could tell that it was a divine weapon. The already tyrannical attacks of Qin Wentian were even more overwhelming with the augmentation effects of his divine weapon.

Mu Baifei's silhouette flickered, his movements akin to the wind. His sword keened, as he unsheathed it with blinding speed. Although his sword strike was delivered after theirs, it actually arrived in front of Qin Wentian at the same moment as the two other swords. Three sword attacks from three different angles, wanting to steal Qin Wentian's life away.

"Mu Baifei, your reputation is undeserved." Ouyang Kuangsheng's countenance was filled with contempt upon seeing Mu Baifei's actions.

Swallow Swordsmen were known for their outstanding attacks, yet even with two, they were counter-pressured by Qin Wentian. And now, with the inclusion of Mu Baifei, there would be no glory even if they won.

Mu Baifei naturally knew this as well. But since he had already intervened, he knew he must kill Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian felt an overwhelming impending sense of danger. He quickly reacted, weaving the ancient halberd in his hands in a beautiful dance, as he swept it out horizontally to block. As expected, although Mu Baifei's sword position appeared to be

further away, it was just an illusion. If his reaction has been slower by even a microsecond, the sword would have already penetrated through Qin Wentian's throat.

Borrowing the power generated from the force of the impact, Qin Wentian executed the Garuda Movement Steps to its utmost limits, his perfected steps appearing exquisite beyond comparison as he retreated. The swords of the two other attackers missed Qin Wentian by an instant, but the terrifying sword Qi of their attacks still slashed towards his face, causing him to feel a sticky sensation.

As he was retreating, he gingerly touched his face, only to feel traces of blood seeping out.

“Swallow Swordsmen?” Qin Wentian inclined his head, staring at his three attackers. An expression of ridicule appeared on his countenance, as he coldly continued, “They're nothing much, after all.”

His words caused the countenances of the crowd to transform into something extremely fascinating to behold. Qin Wentian was truly powerful, to think that he could block a joint attack from Mu Baifei and the two other Swallow Swordsmen.

Mu Baifei pointed his sword straight at Qin Wentian, as he replied, “Is that so?”

As the sound of his voice faded, the eruption of sword Qi from Mu Baifei grew even stronger.

Upon observing all these happenings, a group of people walked towards Mo Qingcheng. As the companion of Qin Wentian, there should also be some Stellar Fruits in her possession right?

However, at this moment, an unknown figure appeared in front of Mo Qingcheng. This figure was robed in black, her delicate and exquisite figure was already sufficient to steal the breath of the crowd away. In addition to wearing a conical bamboo hat, she also wore a veil to conceal her features. Only a pair of exceptionally bright and clear eyes could be seen of her features.

The moment the mysterious figure appeared, a group of similarly clothed cultivators stood to her left and right, directly in front of Mo Qingcheng. Their movements caused the crowd to feel as if they were intentionally protecting her.

With the exception of the mysterious figure, the features of the rest of her comrades were unmasked, their beautiful faces could be clearly seen by the crowd.

“Does the Mystic Moon Hall wish to intervene?” A strange glow appeared in Mu Baifei’s eyes as he took in the situation. Those from the Mystic Moon Hall were always mysterious, cultivating many unfathomable and bizarre innate techniques that contained excessive Yin. Thus, the majority of cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall were females.

Mystic Moon Hall of the Spirit Continent, it was one of the transcendent powers of the nine continents.

Initially, Qin Wentian was extremely worried for Mo Qingcheng, but upon seeing those from the Mystic Moon Hall protecting her, he let out a sigh of relief. However, he couldn't help but wonder at their actions. Mo Qingcheng was from Chu, and shouldn't have had contact with those from the Mystic Moon Hall before.

“She’s from the Mystic Moon Hall?”

An excited gleam appeared in the eyes of Shiki from the Beast King Hall as he took note of Mo Qingcheng. Although Mo Qingcheng’s current features were obscured, he had once seen what she really looked like. And now upon seeing the group of cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall guarding Mo Qingcheng, he deduced that she was definitely one of the important chosen disciples from Mystic Moon. This knowledge caused his lust to soar even higher.

“Hehe, ATTACK,” Shiki coldly commanded. An instant later, the cultivators from the Beast King Hall lunged out, as terrifying demonic Qi permeated the air.

“A bunch of vile bastards.” Someone in the Mystic Moon Hall ridiculed. The majority of cultivators in the Beast King Hall were all of beastmen lineage. Upon hearing the taunt, their anger exploded as they clashed with those from the Mystic Moon Hall.

“You are mine.” A smile of lust appeared on Shiki’s face as he crouched down on all fours, darting towards Mo Qingcheng. An extremely icy look flashed in Mo Qingcheng’s eyes as she released her Astral Souls. As a Yuanfu cultivator, even though her Yuanfu was currently suppressed, she would still have an advantage when

fighting against cultivators at the Arterial Circulation Realm.

Qin Wentian glanced in the direction of Shiki, furrowing his brows as a terrifying cold light flickered in his eyes. In his heart, he had already sentenced Shiki to death.

Qin Wentian opened his mouth, swallowing a Stellar Fruit just as a wave of terrifying sword Qi gushed over from the approaching Swallow Swordsmen.

“There’s still time for all of you to stop your actions now,” Qin Wentian coldly stated. He was extremely worried for Mo Qingcheng.

“You must die here today,” Mu Baifei just as coldly, replied.

The three of them joined hands to attack Qin Wentian. If he were to still survive, what would happen to their reputation? And in future, how could they still have the face to interact with cultivators of the same generation within the nine continents?

Currently, all of them already were half a step into Yuanfu. In just a mere year or two later, it would be their turn for their names to shine brilliantly.

“Since you wish to court death so much, I shall grant it to you.” Qin Wentian slammed his ancient halberd downwards, embedding it in the ground as a terrifying tempest of sword Qi emanated forth from him

To their extreme astonishment, the crowd saw countless swords manifest from Astral Energy, flickering about Qin Wentian, and shrouding him within. The sharp keen of swords grinding each other could be heard, as an incredibly monstrous sword Qi emanated forth.

AGM 187 – Ouyang Joins The Battle

“Sword Qi.”

Mu Baifei and the two other swordsmen furrowed their brows. Resplendent sword light, flickered all around Qin Wentian, its radiance shrouding him within. The Astral Light transformed into countless numbers of flawlessly sharp swords, each emitting a keening wail.

Relentless waves of monstrously sharp sword Qi gushed out from each sword formed from the Astral Light.

“How amazing.” The crowd stared at Qin Wentian, flabbergasted. This fellow wasn’t from any of the transcendent powers, so how could his combat prowess be at this high a level.

And yet the aura of Qin Wentian kept climbing upwards with no signs of stopping. An incredibly demonic presence could be felt, as the blood seal inside his body multiplied. As the seals trembled violently, the bloody aura covered each and every one of the astral swords.

Glancing once more at Qin Wentian, his appearance transformed into a Bloodsword Sovereign, the demonic Qi he exuded only growing stronger and stronger.

“Since you all wish to court death, I shall grant you what you seek.”

Qin Wentian's words resounded through the air, sounding exceptionally tyrannical. He sought death for all present Swallow Swordsmen.

BOOM! Mu Baifei and his cronies moved, and in the midst of it all, Qin Wentian finally took a single step forwards.

With merely a single step, the keening wail of his swords intensified, as the countless astral swords combined together. The swords transformed, surging into a spiral of sword waves intent on devouring everything.

Mu Baifei's countenance changed as he coldly hollered, "SWORD HOWL!"

As the sound of his voice faded, boundless amounts of sword light generated from the three Swallow Swordsmen converged. Their Sword-type divine weapons grinded against each other, creating a cacophony of sword howls. Accompanying it all, the sword intent emanating in the air stacked over each other, overlapping and enhancing the power of the sword howls.

Under the overwhelming pressure that Qin Wentian exuded, the Swallow Swordsmen were actually forced to resort to these types of sword-combination attacks?

"DIE!" The Sword-type Divine Energy within his body erupted forth, powering his astral swords spiral and blasting them forwards. Tens of millions of swords amalgamated together into

formation, becoming a single supreme sword. The sight of this phenomenon caused endless shock to the spectating crowd, not to mention the underlying fact that all Yuanfu Cultivators' Yuanfus were still sealed. If unleashed outside of the Refinement Grounds, the power of this attack would be sufficient enough to kill Yuanfu experts, as well.

“KILL!” Mu Baifei and the two other Swallow Swordsmen roared, as the cacophony of sword howls shook the heavens, transforming into a gigantic dragon, dashing forwards with rage. This was an extremely high level innate technique that enabled the might of their sword to manifest into a real dragon. This technique could only be carried out if three sword cultivators joined their hearts and minds as one, creating the cacophony of sword howls before it could be executed. From this, it could be seen how great was their pressure when facing Qin Wentian.

The crowd was dumbstruck as they witnessed the events happening on the battlefield. The supreme sword, along with the sword spirals, collided explosively with the sword dragon, resulting in a burst of multi-colored radiance in the surroundings. The noise made by the sword howls, coupled with the sword keening, was so intense it almost broke the ear drums of everyone in the vicinity. Boundless bursts of sword Qi erupted in all directions, forcing the crowd of spectators to either dodge or suffer death.

At the area where Qin Wentian stood, clouds of dust flew all about as a result of the earlier attack. Mu Baifei and the two attackers burst into retreat; their white robes were lacerated into pieces, and traces of blood could be seen on their clothing. At this moment, their countenances all appeared to be incomparably

heavy, as they stared at the tyrannical Qin Wentian in front of them. Despite their incredible sword-combination innate technique, they still failed to overcome Qin Wentian.

Nobody would have imagined that at this moment, Qin Wentian was exceptionally shocked as well. He was very clearly aware of the power of his own attack; the tremendous power of his sword-type Divine Energy transformed into Divine Imprints for attacking purposes. In addition to his powerful body and the augmentation of his power by his bloodline limit, this attack was something he had specially prepared to deal with Yuanfu cultivators. But to think that in the end, this attack still failed to kill Mu Baifei and the two other swordsmen.

This particular attack exhausted an extremely large amount of Qin Wentian's energy reserve. Despite this, he ate another Stellar Fruit, as he stared at Mu Baifei.

The countenances of the three Swallow Swordsmen were extremely unsightly. To think that they wanted to bully Qin Wentian into giving up the Stellar Fruits, but had rammed their toes into a metal board instead.

They were the prestigious swordsmen that hailed from the Yan Continent and had absolute confidence in their own powers. However, the three of them had actually been suppressed by a nameless nobody.

Not so far away, Qian Mengyu and the two other surviving female cultivators had expressions of extreme fascination on their faces.

Shock could be seen on Qian Mengyu's countenance, a thunderstruck expression reflected on her face. To think that he was so powerful, how laughable it was to assume Qin Wentian followed them because he needed their protection.

And what was even more ludicrous was that after Qin Wentian obtained the Stellar Fruits, he had wanted to split the fruits equally between them. However, one of her companions actually suggested that, because Qin Wentian was under their protection, his status was as one of their followers. Because of this, they themselves should decide on the division of the fruits according to their desires. In the end, although Qian Mengyu agreed to split the fruits equally, everyone could tell that she didn't do so willingly. Now that she thought of it, she couldn't help but feel a burning sensation on her face.

Qin Wentian was the one who suggested to split the fruits equally with them. Even if Qin Wentian didn't want to do so, what could they even do to him?

Mu Baifei and the other two swordsmen used their absolute strength to suppress the four of them, even killing one, yet the three swordsmen were totally suppressed by Qin Wentian alone.

The female cultivator beside Qian Mengyu, the one who kept making snide remarks towards Qin Wentian, turned ashen and pale white upon seeing the true combat prowess of Qin Wentian.

Qin Wentian disregarded their opinion of him. At this moment,

he stopped his attacks and stared straight at Mu Baifei and the two others. Although his earlier moves consumed a great portion of his Astral Energy reserve, he had sufficient power to unleash one final attack. But if he were to do so, he would be hardpressed to deal with any future troubles that might come by later. Similarly, the Astral Energy expenditure of Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen should have been astronomical, as well.

On the other side of the battlefield, Mo Qingcheng didn't suffer any disadvantages when fighting against Shiki. This was also the reason why Qin Wentian didn't immediately help out.

The cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall seemed superior to those from the Beast King Hall in combat; this didn't mean that the overall strength of the Mystic Moon Hall was superior but instead, it was all because the veiled mysterious lady was extremely powerful. Her movements were like the shadows, giving people an unfathomable feeling. Her presence was so vague, to the extent it was difficult to even sense her existence. By the time she showed herself to her opponents, the long black lance equipped in her hands would have already penetrated through their hearts. Several of those beastmen died in her hands.

This caused many in the crowd to feel a chill in their hearts; the Mystic Moon Hall, one of the transcendent powers in the nine continents, were famed for their extremely sinister and crafty innate techniques. There were truly very few people who dared to antagonise them.

It was also rumoured that the training of the disciples from the Mystic Moon Hall was extremely brutal, to the point where it could

be described as undergoing excruciating torture. Their aim was to polish their disciples into a sharp lance of darkness, training them in assassination.

However at this moment, Yao Sheng stepped forwards as the cultivators from the Skydemon Sect started to stir.

Although Yao Sheng and Shiki were in an alliance, he didn't opt to help out when the cultivators from the Beast King Hall were defeated. Instead, he chose to wait until several cultivators of the Beast King Hall died before taking action. This caused many to speculate that although he still wanted the alliance with Shiki, he didn't wish the Beast King Hall to be at full strength.

“Kill,” Yao Sheng coldly commanded, before sweeping his gaze over to Qin Wentian and the Swallow Swordsmen. It would be perfect if both parties were to heavily injure each other.

Qin Wentian frowned; he wasn't clear as to the reason why those from the Mystic Moon Hall chose to help Mo Qingcheng. But since they had done so, he didn't want any danger to befall them because of their decision. Yet, he was all alone, not allied to anyone and had no way to send help to them.

“Ouyang Kuangsheng, could you please help those from Mystic Moon Hall? After this, it can be considered that I owe you a favour. How about it?” Qin Wentian was still staring at the Swallow Swordsmen as he spoke, with his back facing to Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng didn't expect that Qin Wentian would ask him for help. Contemplation shone in his eyes before he smiled, "Fine, but there's no need for you to owe me any favours. Let it be considered that I, Ouyang Kuangsheng, have made a friend."

After speaking, he stepped out. Abruptly, a brilliant glow shone as his body was covered in terrifying flames. A fearsome heat emanated forth from him, as he shot a punch outwards. The cultivators in front of him felt their bodies boiling, exploding under the pressure.

"Ouyang Kuangsheng is truly powerful, so wild and unrestrained. To think that he would dare to offend two transcendent powers – the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, just because of a single sentence from an unknown person."

Many in the crowd marveled at the display, but then again they had already heard of Ouyang Kuangsheng's personality; he was truly someone who did what he wished at any moment with no concern for what others might think.

If he cared for their opinion, he wouldn't have waited so long before starting cultivation, even though others his age were already in the Arterial Circulation Realm. No one knew how many stares of contempt and derision he'd had to endure back then. However, he didn't give a damn about their contempt, and chose to wait until he was able to condense an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer before commencing cultivation. His success had catapulted him from a nobody to having overwhelming fame in just a single night.

This kind of nonchalance by itself could also be considered a type of arrogance. He did whatever he wanted, the thoughts and feelings of others be damned.

It was only then that Ouyang Kuangcheng made a complete evaluation of Qin Wentian. There was no need to doubt his power after seeing him suppress the three Swallow Swordsmen, and there was no need to doubt his character after his previous offer to split the Stellar Fruits equally with those from the Greencloud Pavilion . The most important thing was that he personally witnessed Qin Wentian subduing the Yellow Springs Monument.

For thousands of years, the legend of the Yellow Springs ancient pathway had circulated around the nine continents. Coming face to face with the Yellow Springs, repent and see the shore (turn back and be forgiven). If one was powerful enough, they would be able to transcend the pathway and survive unscathed. But Qin Wentian was the first to directly subdue the Yellow Springs Monument.

Thus, after Qin Wentian spoke, Ouyang Kuangsheng only needed a few moments to consider before he agreed. A person like Qin Wentian was worthy of his friendship.

“Many thanks.” Qin Wentian could feel how forthright Ouyang Kuangsheng was. He, too, didn’t mind making such a friend.

And just like that, the various representatives of the transcendent powers were embroiled in the fights, caused by an unknown person – Qin Wentian.

But what a pity, those from the Greencloud Pavilion no longer had the qualifications to participate in the fierce battles. The girl accompanying Ouyang Kuangsheng, Jiang Ting and the other cultivators from the Jiang Clan, had not even arrived yet.

The only one remaining was, Wang Xiao, hailing from the Wang Clan of the War Continent. Many in the crowd swept their gaze towards Wang Xiao only to see him calmly standing, watching the events play out in front of him with no change in expression. No one could tell what he was thinking, but one thing everyone knew was that out of the transcendent powers that came to the Refinement Grounds, Wang Xiao was definitely one of the most powerful elites of the younger generations. His level of strength and combat prowess definitely didn't lose out to Ouyang Kuangsheng.

They just didn't know whether Wang Xiao would participate in this storm of battles for the Stellar Fruits.

But regardless of this, at this moment Qin Wentian could finally be at ease and focus on dealing with these three extremely tough-to-deal-with Swallow Swordsmen from the Yan Continent!

AGM 188 – Gazing Upon The Celestial Lake

Qin Wentian pulled his ancient halberd out from the ground, his Astral Energy having already been fully restored by the Stellar Fruits.

By contrast, Mu Baifei and the two swordsmen didn't have any Stellar Fruits to consume. Fighting against the four female cultivators from the Greencloud Pavilion, fighting a battle with Qin Wentian, and especially executing their sword-combination technique; all these factors had already exhausted a large amount of their energy reserves. As they watched Qin Wentian strutting over, traces of wariness could be seen reflected in their eyes.

Mu Baifei raised the long-sword wielded in his hands, pointing it towards Qin Wentian. The reputation of the Swallow Swordsmen must not be besmirched by their hands.

The two other swordsmen raised their blades as well, the sword intent that emanated forth growing stronger by the second.

Pssst~ Qin Wentian's silhouette transformed into a blurry shadow, and with explosive speed his ancient halberd erupted forth towards Mu Baifei. He opened the battle with the first stance of his Great Dream Halberd Art – Mountain Splitter. Cleaving apart mountains with a single strike, the power of this attack would undoubtedly strike fear in people's hearts. And what's more, this attack of Qin Wentian, was powered by the sword-type Divine Yuan Energy in his body.

As the leader for this group of Swallow Swordsmen, Mu Baifei's combat prowess was naturally the strongest, and he undoubtedly deserved his reputation. He moved his long-sword in gentle arcs, manifesting several streams of light from its tip, boiling with killing intent.

BOOM! The momentum forced Mu Baifei backwards, but at that moment, the swords of the other two instantly slashed out quick as lightning. Qin Wentian spun, maintaining his marvellous footwork, dodging while simultaneously blasting attacks out with his Fallen Mountain Palms. The might of the attacks he unleashed felt as heavy as a mountain and imbued with boundless strength, blocking the sword beam from the left. As the other sword beam shot towards him from the right, he flung out his ancient halberd, transforming it into a streak of light, flying straight towards Mu Baifei. He had voluntarily chosen to give up his weapon.

Puchi~ Qin Wentian spat out several beams of sword light towards his right, instantly dulling the sword might of his opponent. At the same moment, the sounds of gushing water gushing could be heard from the arterial pathways of Qin Wentian, as the Astral Energy within him began to seeth and surge.

“DIE!” The Astral Energy flowed into Qin Wentian's arms, filling them with an incredibly fearsome power as he blasted forth with the Kuji Imprint. Within the palm imprint he struck out, layers of bloody light could be seen flickering within, as an aura of destruction emanated forth from it. Just as a thunderous sound echoed, the impact of collision flung the sword out of his attacker's hands.

How ferocious was Qin Wentian's speed? Along with this long-prepared strike, Qin Wentian simultaneously executed his Garuda Movement Technique to its absolute limits, appearing in front of his opponent in an instant. The countenance of the attacker turned incomparably unsightly. With a howl of rage, he hurriedly stabbed out with his sword fingers, as a surge of powerful sword intent gushed out from it.

But how could there be anyone who could compare to Qin Wentian in terms of close combat? His now-demonic eyes stared at his opponent, causing the other to experience a surreal sensation, akin to that of a nightmare. The earlier blood palm reached him, effortlessly destroying his pathetic attempts at a mounted defense, before barreling through and exploding the head of his opponent.

All that happened in a split-second, however, Mu Baifei and the other attacker swiftly countered his earlier attacks and responded with another of their own, causing a strong sense of danger to rise in Qin Wentian's heart.

In that instant, Qin Wentian adjusted his attack, as the terrifying Divine Yuan Energy within him gushed out in a frenzy, transforming into resplendent astral swords explosively flying towards Mu Baifei. Evidently, Mu Baifei's threat to him was obviously greater. At this exact moment, the sword of the other attacker neared. Qin Wentian sent out his left palm in response, only to see a beam of glimmering sword light slashing apart the space, as traces of blood appeared on his palms. The sword of his opponent was too sharp.

Against such an opponent, a moment of carelessness would mean

death.

Qin Wentian retreated with rapid speed. Mu Baifei and his remaining crony knew that they had missed the best opportunity to kill Qin Wentian. Their gazes turned heavy as they stared at the corpse of their comrade, their killing intents soaring to the limits.

Qin Wentian turned back, glancing at Mo Qingcheng. Shiki was half-mad with anger; he had already went all out, transforming into his half-demonic form. He felt extreme shame at the thought of being unable to suppress Mo Qingcheng despite his status.

However, there was no need to worry about those from the Mystic Moon Hall. Ouyang Kuangsheng was truly powerful, so with him supporting those from the Mystic Moon Hall, as a group they weren't inferior to those from the Skydemon Sect.

And as for those cultivators from the non-transcendent powers, they silently watched with glee. They were in the weaker position, and any outcome resulting from this fight would be extremely beneficial to them.

“Brr, what a cold wind.” At that moment, someone suddenly shivered. And the gale of cold wind only grew stronger and stronger.

The crowd of spectators furrowed their brows, as they gazed in a particular direction. The converging point of their focus was none other than the only gap through the Mountain Rampart! The suction force of that pathway became increasingly stronger, to the

point where the nearby granules of sand and gravel started to fly towards it.

“What’s the hell is happening?” A few seconds later, a terrifying windstorm formed and could be seen swerving with incredible speed towards the gap. The suction force intensified as though the gap was the mouth of a gigantic demon wishing to devour everything.

Even the clothing worn on the bodies of the cultivators were fluttering in response to the suction force. Some of the weaker cultivators felt as though they were about to be swept off their feet, about to be drawn in. This terrifying sensation only escalated in strength.

Everyone ceased their attacks, and Qin Wentian was forced backwards by half a step from the force generated from the terrifying windstorm. Stabilizing his posture, Qin Wentian couldn’t even open his eyes, the demonic wind was simply too bizarre.

Underneath the pressure borne from the gale of demonic wind, many cultivators could no longer keep their steps steady but instead found themselves flustered as they stumbled about, trying to find their footing. A random cultivator was seemingly ‘directed’ by the suction force, barreling towards the direction of Qin Wentian. However, when he neared, that person abruptly turned about, brandishing a gigantic axe. He chopped down with ferocious speed, intent on smashing Qin Wentian apart.

Qin Wentian instantly broke out in a cold sweat. Under the

suction force and the incoming windstorm, he couldn't even move his body. How could he then dodge the strike? It was even tougher to summon the required strength to defend against the attack, not to mention the extremely terrifying force his attacker used to swing down the gigantic axe with. This 'random' cultivator was most definitely someone also standing at the peak of the younger generation scheming to obtain his Stellar Fruits.

Qin Wentian relinquished total control of his body, not fighting against the pull of the demonic wind. His body flew directly towards the gap in the Mountain Rampart, as the gigantic axe cleaved past. A fearsome axe light flickered, as sounds of laceration rang out. His robes were slashed apart as a long wound appeared in front of his chest.

BOOM! Qin Wentian slammed into the mountain wall, excruciating pain assailing his senses. The intensity of that surge of demonic wind was too terrifying.

"Wentian!" Mo Qingcheng's worried voice drifted over. She had personally witnessed that terrifying axe cleaving downwards earlier, and was struggling to move towards Qin Wentian.

"I'm alright." Qin Wentian turned his head, smiling at Mo Qingcheng. He felt the power of his bloodline limit surging, as the bloody wound on his chest slowly recovered. After which, he sensed the blood seal within his body leaping towards the direction of his wound, as his recovery rate visibly heightened. His heart trembled slightly; only now did he understand how powerful his bloodline was.

“Over here.” Mo Qingcheng reached her hand out to Qin Wentian, as he leaned against the mountain walls, moving towards her. With her dainty little hand finally in his grasp, he spoke, “Qingcheng, I don’t think anyone would be able to resist such a powerful gale of wind. Let’s allow nature to take its course, and we shall enter that pathway.”

“Mhm.” Mo Qingcheng lightly nodded her head, as they tightened their grasp on each other’s hands.

“Go.” Qin Wentian didn’t bother retrieving his ancient halberd, neither did he bother to look for the wielder of the gigantic axe. The most important thing now was safety. These cultivators were all extremely ruthless, and even in the face of the windstorm, people were still unwilling to miss a chance to get the Stellar Fruits.

The two of them completely stopped resisting the pull of the wind, allowing the currents to steer them towards the direction of the pathway. Yet another thunderous sound boomed. Qin Wentian could only feel his head spinning, not realising that he had slammed into the mountain walls. That gust of wind was so strong he couldn’t even open his eyes.

Circulating Astral Energy around his body, his blood seethed and surged, protecting his inner organs and vital channels. At the same time, Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng into his arms, using his body as a shelter to shield her from any collision as their bodies soared together with the currents of the raging wind.

Mo Qingcheng's inner organs shuddered violently, when suddenly she felt the warmth of an embrace. Sweetness filled her heart as she snuggled into Qin Wentian's protective hug, hugging him even tighter.

Qin Wentian was slammed again and again into the mountain walls by the merciless wind. Finally, after what felt like an eternity, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng were ruthlessly hurled to the ground. Entwining their bodies together, they rolled sideways to cushion the force of the impact.

Opening his eyes, Qin Wentian gazed into the clear eyes of Mo Qingcheng, as a smile broke out on his face. They were still alive!

Mo Qingcheng smiled back sweetly in response.

As the two of them struggled to sit up, they felt as though their bodies were treated like punching bags, just bags of loose sand only held together by their tenacious wills.

Contemplating their surroundings, they were currently situated in the middle of a windstorm. The reason they could still feel such intense gales of wind was right in front of them; yet another terrifying windstorm faced them, with gusts of cold wind akin to sharp swords and sabres blowing in their path.

But as their eyes penetrated the windstorm, they saw a beautiful scene lying ahead. Towering stone pillar after pillar, so tall they seemingly reached the Heavens, were positioned to the side of a beautiful, starry lake. Star light cascaded downwards, illuminating

the stone pillars. That must be the celestial lake.

As long as they could advance past the windstorm ahead, they would be able to immerse themselves in the waters of the celestial lake.

At that moment, the cultivators that survived from the suction force had all already arrived. When their eyes caught sight of the celestial lake, many discarded all traces of caution, madly rushing ahead to step inside the windstorm tempest. However, those same people quickly slowed their steps, shrouding their bodies with Astral Light in a protective radiance. They could sense how terrifying this final test was.

Advancing step by step, several of the cultivators had already entered the boundaries of the windstorm. Abruptly, one of the cultivators in the lead gave a bloodcurdling scream. His body was shredded into pieces, as blood fanned out in a mist. He had completed a third of the journey, but his energy reserves had been fully used up, and was unable to breach the final barrier.

Such a scenario was met with gasps of shock, especially from those that had already entered the windstorm. However, they had no time for regrets, and could only grit their teeth and continue persevering onwards.

The stench of blood grew increasingly stronger, causing many to tremble in fear. All of the cultivators that entered the windstorm had died. For the cultivator that travelled the farthest, he crossed no more than half the required distance.

“Stellar Fruits.” The gazes of several of the remaining cultivators landed on Qin Wentian and Mu Baifei. Those two were the only ones that possessed the Stellar Fruits, other than Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Without sufficient Astral Energy to protect oneself, entering the windstorm equated to certain death. The existence of the Stellar Fruits were precisely for this purpose - to breach the final barrier: entering the celestial lake.

The crowd moved quickly, surrounding Qin Wentian, Mo Qingcheng and Mu Baifei. Within the blink of an eye, they blocked their path, preventing them from entering the windstorm. It was not just them, even Ouyang Kuangsheng found himself surrounded.

They definitely had to obtain the Stellar Fruits, and were left with no other choice but to take this risk.

The windstorm whirled with ever increasing fury, until someone at last made their move. Wang Xiao of the War Continent was the first to take action, and his chosen target was none other than the Swallow Swordsman, Mu Baifei.

Qin Wentian glanced askance at the other Swallow Swordsman standing near Mu Baifei. Currently, he was the only one remaining out of the three Swallow Swordsmen; one had died and the other was occupied. When he finally noticed Qin Wentian’s cold gaze directed towards him, his heart shivered with debilitating dread.

AGM 189 – Wang Xiao Of The War Continent

At this point, no one else dared to step within the windstorm tempest. It was clear to them that one was required to constantly circulate their Astral Energy to resist the windstorm, and once their energy reserves were exhausted, it would be too late to retreat even if you wanted to.

Now, even if the cultivators wanted to test the wind's intensity, they wouldn't directly enter the tempest. At most, they would only take a few steps nearer to it.

And the sole thought going through everyone's mind was that, only with the Stellar Fruits would they be able to breach this current obstacle.

However, obtaining the Stellar Fruits didn't even cross the mind of the remaining Swallow Swordsman; he was now only filled with concern regarding the safety of his own life. Seeing Qin Wentian advancing step by step, closer and closer towards him, he felt true fear for the first time.

Seeing the silhouette of the youth walking towards him, he felt an unprecedented sense of pressure. Earlier back then, the three of them joined hands to deal with Qin Wentian, but was still unable to get the better of him. Now, he was facing Qin Wentian alone.

Bzzz~ Qin Wentian executed his movement technique, and instantly arrived in front of his opponent. The Divine Yuan Energy within his arterial pathways circulated in a frenzy, blasting out a

blood-colored Kuji Imprint that emanated an overwhelming pressure of desolation . The Swallow Swordsman turned white, as he raised his sword in an attempt to defend himself. The beams of sword light flickered, but appeared dull and lifeless under the bloody light of the Kuji Imprint. As the sounds of collision rang out, the Swallow Swordsman was forced into retreating several steps, as he could no longer maintain a steady stance.

After which, a sword beam flashed, followed by a gust of cold wind. The swordsman was left feeling a trace of coolness around his throat, before the sensation gave way to a stinging chill.

The sword in his grasp fell onto the ground, both of his hands wrapped around his throat, helplessly trying to staunch the wound. Despair flickered in his eyes, as his legs totally lost strength. Droplets of blood dyed the yellow sand a deep red, before his corpse slumped limply onto the ground, his eyes closing forever in eternal rest.

Traces of wariness appeared in the eyes of the spectators. Although Qin Wentian had Stellar Fruits in his possession, it wouldn't be so easy for one to get a hold of them.

Wang Xiao executed a fearsome innate technique, as he dashed towards Mu Baifei. His entire body was seemingly weaponised, as numerous flying daggers transformed into silver streams of light, flying unceasingly towards Mu Baifei.

Using his sword in defense, Mu Baifei blocked the flying daggers, trembling from the impact. Abruptly, the glow of more terrifying divine weapons flashed, as golden chakrams appeared, breaking

apart Mu Baifei's defense while another long chain covered with sharp blades flew out. This forced Mu Baifei into constant retreat.

RUMBLE~ Wang Xiao's silhouette flickered, as he appeared in front of Mu Baifei. His arms were fully covered by silvery armor plating, easily brushing Mu Baifei's sword aside. Punching out with earthshaking strength, he slammed his fist into Mu Baifei's body, causing the latter to vomit large amounts of fresh blood.

"Wait, I'll give you the Stellar Fruits," Mu Baifei implored to Wang Xiao, his countenance turning bloodlessly pale.

Only after hearing this did Wang Xiao stop. Walking towards Mu Baifei, he had an expression of cool indifference on his face as he extended his hands outwards. Mu Baifei placed a Stellar Fruit into Wang Xiao's outstretched arms, only to see Wang Xiao frowning as he coldly stated, "Give me all the fruits. I shall not ask again."

Mu Baifei could only grit his teeth and comply, giving up all his Stellar Fruits to Wang Xiao. He would never have imagined that he himself, the pride of the Swallow Swordsmen, would actually be in such a state today.

Wang Xiao turned around, his followers appearing at his side as he distributed the Stellar Fruits equally between them. Obviously, it was plain to see that he would not be the only one to enjoy the benefits of the celestial lake; he wished for those accompanying him to enjoy them as well.

If Qin Wentian were to glance over, he would have realized that

one of the followers of Wang Xiao was none other than his earlier attacker – the person who wielded the gigantic axe.

“We still need more...” Wang Xiao furrowed his brows as he turned his gaze onto Qin Wentian and Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was currently standing together with those from the Mystic Moon Hall. They seemed to have formed an alliance, together defending against the threat from the Skydemon Sect and Beast King Hall.

And as for Qin Wentian, after his killing of the Swallow Swordsman, many in the crowd were eyeing him but had yet to make a move against him.

Many of the cultivators had already fallen, with only around forty or above remaining. Wang Xiao cast his gaze around the crowd, a cold glint of light flickering in his eyes, as he pointed at the gap in the Mountain Rampart. “Those who don’t wish to die, get over there now,” Wang Xiao coldly commanded, his cool and indifferent countenance made it seem as though he was merely making an ordinary statement.

Several cultivators stiffened at his words as astonishment flashed on their faces. Narrowing their eyes, they discovered six other silhouettes standing behind Wang Xiao, making the total number of cultivators from the War Continent to be seven.

And just so coincidentally, there were only a total number of seven spots available for those qualified to immerse themselves

into the celestial lake. It was evident what Wang Xiao's intentions were, even without words.

And not just his words, everyone in the crowd could sense how strong his arrogance was, and how exceedingly great his ambitions were as well.. He wanted those who came with him to monopolize the seven open spots available.

At this point in time, although several in the crowd knew they didn't have too great a chance to be one of the final seven, they still held a faint hint of hope in their hearts. They couldn't bear to give up this chance, and aside from that, there was still a cultivator amongst them who had a full tank of energy reserves. Making up his mind, he decisively stepped into the tempest, wanting to try his luck.

"Clear the battlefield," Wang Xiao's cold voice rang out, as his six of followers congregated together, standing in a line as an intense killing aura abruptly gushed forth. They were all akin to emotionless divine weapons, created only for killing. The six of them approached the crowd, as light from their own various divine weapons erupted forth in a shining radiance.

"KILL!" Sounds of rage rang out, as killing intent overflowed to the Heavens. Those from the Wang Clan transformed into terrifying killing machines, snuffing out their targets. Just as Wang Xiao commanded, they started to clear the battlefield.

The Wang Clan that always maintained a low profile, finally unveiled their true colours after gazing upon the celestial lake.

Killing intent akin to a raging wind devastated the entire space, and very quickly, four cultivators fell under their weapons.

Qian Mengyu and her fellow cultivators stood there, shivering with terror as they saw those from the Wang Clan walking towards them.

At this moment, Qian Mengyu's emotions were extremely complicated. She, who had always been conceited, didn't even have the qualifications to partake in the final battle.

The truth was cruel, but she had no choice but to accept it.

She was very clear of what today's confrontation indicated. Among the younger generations of the transcendent powers, she didn't even have the ability to stand on equal ground with them. Not to mention that for those who came today, this was not all that the transcendent powers of the Nine Continents had to offer. If she couldn't even stand on equal grounds with them now, how could she ever have a place to rule in the vast stage that was the Nine Continents?

If in the future, this exact same scenario happened again, she would definitely be eliminated by the era, becoming just an ordinary someone.

In the countless years since the Nine Continents were formed, which of those monstrous geniuses didn't have to fight their own way up the ranks against those in the same generation, before their

talent shook the world.

Sighing in her heart, Qian Mengyu bowed and walked in the direction of the gap, not even turning to look back.

Just today, her first loss was to Mu Baifei; Qin Wentian stood equally against three of the Swallow Swordsmen; Wang Xiao overwhelmingly dominated Mu Baifei.

One could well imagine how lousy she felt.

Seeing Qian Mengyu leading those from the Greencloud Pavilion away, many in the crowd also gave up their resistance, and decided not to participate in this dispute.

The reason why they participated in the tests, was none other than to obtain the chance to immerse themselves within the celestial lake. Although for many, the objective this time was to use this experience to temper themselves, it was more important to stay alive . Even though it was regretful to give up, they had already benefited from this trip. As long as they worked harder in their cultivation, they could still stand against these dazzling characters in future to truly see who was stronger.

Wang Xiao, Ouyang Kuangsheng, Mu Baifei and that nameless fellow. All these people were firmly engraved in the memories of the crowd. In the future, these people would surely leave their mark in the history of the Grand Xia Empire.

The cultivator who had stepped into the tempest earlier couldn't advance any further. Although he felt regret, he did not continue forward and chose instead to retreat. However, just when he was about to exit the tempest, his energy reserves ran out and so his body was shredded into pieces, lacerated by the powerful windstorm. This struck fear into the people's hearts.

Without Stellar Fruits, there shouldn't be anyone confident enough to breach the windstorm tempest.

Wang Xiao glanced at his surroundings; there were almost no bystanders left. The only ones remaining were those still in combat - the Skydemon Sect, Beast King Hall, Mystic Moon Hall and Ouyang Kuangsheng.

Ouyang Kuangsheng was truly powerful, indeed. He alone, was sufficient to stand against the half-mad Shiki and maniacal Yao Sheng. Not only that, he didn't appear to be any weaker than them, either. Let the terrifying storms and rain come as they may; he shall remain immovable, standing steadfastly on the ground. His attacks were just as wild and overbearing as before. Although people will say Ouyang Kuangsheng had a frivolous personality, and does whatever he wants without concern for others, during battle, regardless of his attack or his defense, both were at an extremely high level. From this, one could see that his foundations were well established, and had reached the peak of proficiency in his innate techniques.

Discounting those that were currently in battle, the ones remaining were only Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. Even Mu Baifei had given up.

Wang Xiao walked towards Qin Wentian, his followers trailing behind him. The aura they projected made it seem that these seven from the Wang Clan really intended to clear up the entire battlefield, eliminating all their competitors one by one, until the seven spots solely belonged to them.

Wang Xiao waved his hands, as his followers halted their movements. He then walked alone towards Qin Wentian. In the beginning, he had thought that in this tempering exercise, only Ouyang Kuangsheng was qualified to be his opponent. But after meeting Qin Wentian, he really wanted to test himself against this unknown stranger that could apparently fight against Mu Baifei and his two companions on an equal footing. He wanted to see how strong Qin Wentian was exactly.

“I shall deal with her then.” A figure behind Wang Xiao spoke. They understood Wang Xiao’s intentions, but there was no way they would allow Mo Qingcheng to interfere with the battle of Wang Xiao and Qin Wentian.

After speaking, the figure walked towards Mo Qingcheng. It was none other than the person wielding the great axe who tried to ambush Qin Wentian.

Manifesting a surge of terrifying killing intent, Wang Xiao increased his speed, almost to the point of running, causing the yellow sand to scatter about his feet. Qin Wentian’s feet shook slightly, as his silhouette disappeared from sight, dashing towards Wang Xiao in a similar fashion. Their intent to battle could clearly be seen reflected in the fiery glint in their eyes, the only difference

between them being their aura. Wang Xiao's aura was emotionless and sharp, akin to a divine weapon, whereas Qin Wentian's aura was fiend-like and incredibly demonic, as though he were the monarch of all demons, unexcelled in the world.

AGM 190 – Might Of The Yellow Springs Monument

Wang Xiao and Qin Wentian finally clashed, as they both raised their palms to attack. On Wang Xiao's body, a terrifying sharpness akin to divine weapons emanated forth. His arm alone had the aura of an exceptionally sharp sword.

Qin Wentian blasted out with his Falling Mountain Palms, its might manifesting the pressure of a gigantic mountain and slamming down with great power.

After they both matched palms, a deafening sound rang out as the pressure emanating from the Falling Mountain Palms seemingly dissolved into nothing. An ice cold sharpness shot through Qin Wentian's body, while a dream current shot forth from his eyes after locking gazes with Wang Xiao.

Wang Xiao narrowed his eyes, and an instant later, they turned a silvery white, protecting against the intrusion.

Puchi~ Qin Wentian spat out beams of sword light, while Wang Xiao spun in the air, causing several silver daggers to explosively fly towards Qin Wentian at the speed of lightning.

Qin Wentian's countenance stiffened, as he responded with his Dragon Subduing Fists. Twin dragons manifested, their roars shaking the Heavens as they blocked the comets of silver daggers.

Bzzzz! A resplendent golden ring of light exploded forth, spiraling with extreme speed, smashing towards Qin Wentian. He felt an extremely strong sense of danger; the power of the golden chakram were incredibly shocking.

“Kuji Imprint.” Qin Wentian’s palms blasted out with a strength that could topple mountains and overturn seas. As a thunderous sound echoed, he forced back the golden chakram, returning them to Wang Xiao. As Wang Xiao caught hold of the chakram, he simultaneously sent out a silvery chain to bind Qin Wentian. That golden chakram spun out yet again, with fearsome speed.

Wang Clan from the War Continent, a Clan that specializes in the forging of weapons. To them, the many powerful divine weapons found out there in the market were merely the same level as common ones. Those from the clan would have several divine weapons hidden on their body.

Pulses of blood light could be seen flickering on Qin Wentian’s palm. The demonic Qi surged and seethed, and Qin Wentian manifested a gigantic palm shadow. He blocked the sneak attack and was unexpectedly successful in holding onto the silver metallic chain shot out by Wang Xiao, while his other palm once again repelled the golden chakram. The Qin Wentian at this moment seemed to possess an inexhaustible amount of energy.

Then, a dazzling white light intensified, as it erupted forth from Wang Xiao’s body. It was as though he too, had a bloodline limit. An aura of sharpness enveloped his body, as his eyes glowed with a white light. A full set of armor manifested, as every part of Wang Xiao was protected, giving forth an emotionless and indomitable

aura.

BOOM! Stepping forwards, it was as though Wang Xiao's entire body had transformed into several divine weapons. He stared at Qin Wentian, slashing out with his golden chakram while punching out with a fist coated by protrusions of sharpness, aiming for Qin Wentian's head.

“Wang Xiao from the War Continent, with his entire body seemingly weaponised. How terrifying.” The spectators were all trembling with fear. Within the crowd, Wang Xiao, Ouyang Kuangsheng, and Qin Wentian were undoubtedly the strongest three.

Wang Xiao's attacking methods were innumerable and varied, yet he still could not handle Qin Wentian. At this moment, he was truly incensed.

Qin Wentian's palms were still locking down the silver chain, observing how Wang Xiao used his strength. An inexhaustible amount of sword rays erupted forth from Qin Wentian's body, as he forcefully tried to reel in his opponent. The sword-type Divine Yuan Energy within his body, started to gush out with no restraint. He emanated an aura of sharpness, wanting to lacerate everything into nothingness.

BOOM! Qin Wentian took yet another step forwards, relinquishing his hold on the chain. Sending out numerous palm shadows, his palm's might congealed into a spiral, battling against the multitude of divine weapons that Wang Xiao possessed.

“KILL!” a voice roared in anger, Qin Wentian continued forwards. The blood aura of his bloodline integrated within his sword aura, his appearance akin to a sovereign of swords.

Both their attacks collided, the resulting shock waves giving out a resplendent glow so blinding it was impossible for the crowd to even open their eyes. Both Qin Wentian and Wang Xiao were forced back by the impact. Particularly for Wang Xiao, there were actually traces of blood flowing down that indomitable weaponised body of his.

Wang Xiao froze in shock. Lifting his head, the aura he exuded got colder and colder, as they both retrieved a Stellar Fruit, devouring it. They knew that they had just met their strongest opponent.

Qin Wentian glanced at his side; Mo Qingcheng was currently fighting against the axe wielder, and looked to be completely suppressed by him. Her opponent was also of the Yuanfu realm, and all three of his Astral Souls were of the weapon-type kind, thus bestowing him with insane attack power. At that moment, he lifted his gigantic axe, madly cleaving downwards. Mo Qingcheng's countenance paled as she did her utmost to defend, but despite doing so, the incoming force still caused her to spit out blood. Her breathing was ragged, but she still tried her best to suppress it, not wanting the sound to bother Qin Wentian.

Swish~ Qin Wentian's silhouette flickered, as he dashed towards Mo Qingcheng. However, the other members of the Wang Clan blocked his path, whilst an impending sense of doom approached

him from the back. Wang Xiao trailed him from behind, as silver beams of light abruptly appeared.

“DIE!” Wang Xiao shouted coldly, as a silver-colored round ball appeared in his palms. The moment he flung out the silver ball, it exploded into countless silver fragments, each filled with a terrifying attack power. Each attack was akin to arcs of silver lightning, erupting towards the direction of Qin Wentian.

A glow of blood colored light gleamed in Qin Wentian’s eyes as he explosively released the towering power of his bloodline, causing a stone monument to materialize directly in front of him. That, was none other than the Yellow Springs Monument.

He had just obtained the monument, and still didn’t know how to utilize its power yet, but at this juncture, he had no other choice but to use it.

The moment his next step landed on the ground, Qin Wentian’s demonic aura soared to the Heavens. The glow of blood flickered, as the resplendent sharp swords created from his sword-type Divine Yuan Energy formed a spiral of protection, flying forwards to block the silver fragments. At the same time, Qin Wentian channeled his blood aura into the Yellow Springs Monument. He could sense an extremely fearsome blood Qi within the monument, controllable via resonance with his bloodline limit.

BOOM!

An explosive sound rang out, making the hearts of the crowd

pound, the blood flow in their bodies beginning to circulate faster and faster.

The stone monument floated above Qin Wentian, as streams of blood light was shot into it. The blood light could be seen visibly emanating forth from Qin Wentian's body. When the two of them locked gazes, Wang Xiao unconsciously felt a tinge of terror.

Zoom. The Yellow Springs Monument flew towards Wang Xiao.

BOOM! Wang Xiao's heart palpitated madly, the speed of his blood circulation went out of control, feeling as though his blood vessels were about to burst. At this moment, he couldn't care less about his attacks, and could only retreat rapidly. With an ashen expression on his face, he tried to create distance between himself and the monument.

As the monument flew out, Qin Wentian also turned to dash with incredible speed towards Mo Qingcheng.

Thump, thump!

The members of the Wang Clan could feel their hearts pounding madly. Their countenances turned extremely unsightly as they quickly retreated, and even Mo Qingcheng was affected.

Mo Qingcheng's opponent currently had a heavy expression on his face. He cleaved out once more with his axe, before explosively retreating.

“Qingcheng, follow me,” Qin Wentian called out, as he sped towards the axe wielder. Mo Qingcheng followed Qin Wentian, yet maintained a certain distance behind him.

Qin Wentian chased after the axe wielder who was fleeing frenziedly. While doing so, he directed the Yellow Springs Monument to unceasingly zoom towards the escapee.

Thump. His heart pounded, as his countenance turned red.

Thump. His heartbeat quickened, as his veins protruded.

“ARGHH!” howled the man in madness, circulating his Astral Energy to protect himself. However, Qin Wentian pursued him relentlessly, with no intentions of giving up. The terrifying pressure emitted by the Yellow Springs Monument continuously acted on the axe wielder, as it followed his movements.

Thump. His heart shuddered, as he involuntarily spat out a mouthful of blood, his countenance bloodlessly pale.

Thump, thump, THUMP! He, who had finally halted his movements, turned about only to see the Yellow Springs Monument slam into him.

“ARGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...” A bloodcurdling scream rang out, as the blood Qi inside his body exploded, shattering his heart into pieces. Fresh blood sprayed out, landing on the Yellow Springs

Monument before being absorbed. His body slumped down lifelessly, dying a dog's death.

The cultivators all stopped their battles at the same time. Their eyes were filled with stark terror as they stared at the Yellow Springs Monument hovering above Qin Wentian's head.

The Yellow Springs Monument. This was the legendary monument from the Yellow Springs pathway within the Refinement Grounds. Why was it under the control of Qin Wentian?

“This fellow, to think that he could actually control the Yellow Springs Monument to attack.” Although Ouyang Kuangsheng knew Qin Wentian had subdued the monument, he still felt that this was an inconceivable feat. Subduing the monument was one matter, whereas having full control over it was another. It must have been Wang Xiao who had inadvertently forced Qin Wentian to use the Yellow Springs Monument.

However, in the hands of Qin Wentian, the pressure of the Yellow Springs Monument felt somewhat weaker than before. This weakness should be correlated to the cultivation level of Qin Wentian, he guessed.

“Eat this.” Mo Qingcheng walked to the side of Qin Wentian, as she passed him a medicinal pill. She had also eaten one herself, earlier.

As Qin Wentian gazed at Mo Qingcheng, the ice cold look in his

eyes melted, replaced by tender gentleness. Those in the crowd all had similar odd expressions on their faces. This domineering youth who exuded overflowing demonic Qi, actually turned gentle as a kitten in front of Mo Qingcheng.

After ingesting the medicinal pill, both Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng consumed one Stellar Fruit respectively. Locking their gazes, smiles blossomed on their faces. It hadn't been easy surviving the Refinement Grounds up till now.

Qin Wentian then cast a glance towards Ouyang Kuangsheng, only to see that the experts from the Mystic Moon Hall had actually dwindled down to three. The ferocity of the earlier battle was evident. But naturally, this paled in comparison to the disastrous losses suffered by the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect.

Suddenly, those from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect, decided to band together with those from the Wang Clan. From this, one could see the level of threat the current Qin Wentian posed to them.

“Ouyang, do you have enough Stellar Fruits to split with your people?” Qin Wentian inquired.

“I have three others here with me, so the amount of Stellar Fruits I possess should be sufficient to tide us over,” Ouyang Kuangsheng stated. The Stellar Fruits would be useless once they passed the final windstorm barrier, so naturally he wouldn't be stingy towards those in the same alliance.

“Fine, let’s enter,” Qin Wentian exclaimed. Ouyang Kuangsheng distributed the Stellar Fruits as the six of them entered the windstorm tempest. At their actions, the gazes of everyone in the crowd became fixated on them. This meant that out of the seven open spots, only one was left.

Not only that, other than Wang Xiao, none of them had any Stellar Fruits.

At that moment, several in the crowd began to stare at Wang Xiao, including those from the Beast King Hall and Skydemon Sect. There was still one remaining spot, and their hope, naturally rested upon Wang Xiao.

Wang Xiao’s countenance sank, his cold gaze turned even colder as a silver round ball appeared in his hands. An aura of extreme sharpness emanated out from him, causing people around him to feel an overwhelming sense of danger; no one dared to make a move recklessly.

Wang Xiao initially planned for his clan members and himself to monopolise the seven spots of the celestial lake. But now, it was obviously impossible.

Looking at Qin Wentian stepping into the tempest, an incredible killing intent could be felt gushing out from him.

Qian Mengyu stood there at the mountain rampart, sighing as a sour feeling arose in her heart. Back then, Qin Wentian took the

initiative to ally with her. If it weren't for the friction caused by the Stellar Fruits, Qin Wentian would most probably have included her in the final spot!

AGM 191 – Art Of Nine Astrarium

The moment after Qin Wentian and the rest stepped into the windstorm tempest, they felt powerful blades of cold wind gusting about. They immediately circulated their Astral Energy, protecting their bodies.

For Stellar Martial Cultivators, their bodies were inherently weaker. Only demonic beasts were an exception.

It was impossible if one wanted to use their physical body to withstand the tempest. Maybe with his powerful physique, Qin Wentian could just barely withstand it, but it would still be impossible for him to do so without aid from circulating his Astral Energy.

Within the tempest, Qin Wentian held onto Mo Qingcheng's hands, as they walked shoulder to shoulder, advancing slowly ahead. Their bodies were shrouded in the brilliant glow of Astral Light, and they could feel that the rate of Astral Energy consumption was incredibly fast. This was also the reason behind the deaths of the earlier cultivators. Luckily, Qin Wentian and the rest all had Stellar Fruits to replenish their energy reserves.

“Qingcheng, we should consume the Stellar Fruits in advance,” Qin Wentian spoke in a loud voice to Mo Qingcheng beside him, trying to drown out the keen of the wind. Mo Qingcheng nodded her head; they had already crossed a third of the path, and upon consuming the Stellar Fruits, their energy reserves were restored to the brim.

An hour later, their bodies filled with fatigue, Qin Wentian and the rest finally breached the final barrier, as they heaved a sigh of relief.

“How beautiful.” The pretty eyes of Mo Qingcheng gazed ahead. The celestial lake formed a total of seven celestial pools, and each pool was surrounded by sky-high, towering astral stone pillars. The pillars seemed to reach out to the constellations above in the Heavens, causing the shimmering, beautiful starlight to cascade downwards. Nothing more beautiful could be imagined.

This scene, was akin to something in a dream. It was truly gorgeous.

“The Celestial Lake.” Those from the Mystic Moon Hall and Ouyang Kuangsheng had arrived. Smiles could be seen flickering in their eyes as they locked gazes. After all, it was because of their joint alliance that enabled them to reach this place. The entire journey wasn’t easy, indeed.

Qin Wentian pulled Mo Qingcheng along, walking towards the three cultivators from the Mystic Moon Hall. Looking at the veiled lady, he smiled, “Thank you.”

Qin Wentian, when gazing upon the veiled lady, observed that while her eyes were extremely bright and clear, it was as though there were some emotions still left unspoken within them. This caused Qin Wentian to be bewildered, did he know this lady?

“No problem.” The veiled lady lowered her head as she lightly

replied.

Qin Wentian nodded, as he cast a glance towards Ouyang Kuangsheng. And just when he was about to speak, Ouyang Kuangsheng interjected with a laugh. “I’m Ouyang Kuangsheng from the Azure Continent. Although we really are friends now, no matter what it would be better to introduce ourselves again.”

“I’m Qin Wentian, from Chu, a country under the administration of the Nine Mystical Palace.”

Qin Wentian smiled as he nodded to Ouyang Kuangsheng, his countenance at peace, his eyes extremely clear, a total contrast from how demonic he had looked earlier.

“How unexpected. To think you originate from a country under the administration of the Nine Mystical Palace.” Ouyang Kuangsheng had never heard of Chu before, but he knew of the Nine Mystical Palace. Who would have thought that a small country under the administration of the Nine Mystical Palace actually produced such a heaven-defying genius.

“Haha enough of this, let’s get straight to the task at hand.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed as he gazed ahead, looking at the celestial pools. Everyone nodded their heads as they strode forwards in the direction of the celestial pools. The radiance of inexhaustible amounts of starlight could be seen shimmering within the pools.

“I’m going in.” Ouyang Kuangsheng stepped into one of the

celestial pools beside him. The instant he stepped in, the stone pillars surrounding the celestial pool began to flicker with resplendent brilliance, as they actually started to shift. Due to the abundance of Astral Energy, an almost oppressive atmosphere manifested. Ouyang Kuangsheng's figure could no longer be seen, his whole figure hidden by a screen made from motes of beautiful Astral Light.

“Let us enter as well,” Qin Wentian spoke to Mo Qingcheng, as they respectively stepped into two other celestial pools.

Two females from the Mystic Moon Hall also stepped inside the other remaining celestial pools, leaving only the veiled lady behind. A teardrop rolled down her face, as she saw Qin Wentian stepping into a celestial pool. However, she was smiling behind her veil. Her tears, were tears of happiness.

“Wentian gege.”

A light crisp voice rang out, the sound of a young woman.

The veiled lady lifted one of her hands to wipe away the traces of tears forming in the corners of her eyes. She was truly happy, she had finally managed to be of help to her Wentian gege.

In the span of a year, she had suffered many ordeals and also finally met her master, who brought her to the Mystic Moon Hall located in the Spirit Continent. Her master was extremely strict towards her, but she knew that it was all for her own good. However, with no kin by her side, abruptly being thrust into such

a life made her feel tired, so very tired.

It truly felt good to see her Wentian gege again.

“Wentian gege, although I really wish to have a good chat with you, I can’t do so now. My master is excessively strict with me and she would surely find out. I could only secretly arrange for Gu Xing to travel to Chu to help you back then. After knowing that all is well with you and that you even managed to become the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, I’m truly happy. Just like everything I’ve ever imagined you to be, your radiance is finally shining.”

The young lady murmured to herself, she was only able to use such roundabout methods to ‘speak’ with Qin Wentian.

“Mmm, right, you will be even more illustrious in the future. Not only in Chu, not only in the nine states cities, even the Grand Xia Empire will have your story.” The young lady smiled as she finally stepped into one of the celestial pools. Swiftly after, her silhouette couldn’t be seen any longer, as the screen materialised from motes of Astral Light surrounded her.

Qin Wentian wasn’t aware of how the veiled lady murmured to herself. After stepping into the celestial pool, he could sense how saturated with Astral Energy the pool was. Inclining his head and gazing at the Heavens, he could see starlight cascading downwards, flowing down through the astral stone pillars. This kind of sensation felt extremely marvellous, and it was like Heaven when compared to the hellish torture they underwent in the windstorm tempest.

Qin Wentian sat down cross-legged, as he entered into his dreamscape. One of the effects of the Great Dreamcast Art he was cultivating, was the tremendous boost to his cultivation speed when he cultivating through his dreams.

Releasing his Astral Souls, columns and columns of Astral Light shot into his Astral Souls. After the grinding and refinement of his Astral Souls, the Astral Light was converted into Astral Energy before once more flowing into his body. Gradually, the Astral Energy stored within his body filled up to the point of overflowing, as the energy started to stimulate the arterial pathways, meridians and energy channels of his entire body.

Gushing sounds rang out, as each of his nine arterial pathways roared. Over here, it felt as though Astral Energy was unlimited in supply. Wouldn't he be letting himself down if he didn't do his utmost to absorb it all?

Qin Wentian understood very well that for Stellar Martial Cultivators, especially during the Body Refinement and Arterial Circulation Realm, levelling up basically depended on the amount of Astral Energy one's body could hold. The accumulation of Astral Energy was paramount, if one wanted to breakthrough. However, once one steps into Yuanfu, breaking through to the next level would no longer have such a heavy dependence on the amount of Astral Energy gathered any longer.

After all, when one steps into Yuanfu, the capacity of one's Yuanfu will be determined at the time of formation. At most, Yuanfus could only be filled to the brim, and any excess energy

after that limit was reached, would be impossible for the cultivator to absorb. If one wanted to breakthrough to the next level, they would need to increase the capacity of their Yuanfu, and this wasn't something that could be accomplished by merely absorbing Astral Energy. This was also the reason why the celestial lake was so attractive to peak Arterial Circulation Realm, as well as early stage Yuanfu Realm cultivators.

The dip into the celestial pools lasted three days. Qin Wentian could feel his arterial pathways all expanding to their limits. He was only one step away from the formation of his Yuanfu.

At that moment, he opened his eyes, as Astral Light flickered within.

"I've already passed the test of the Refinement Grounds, but where was the secret hidden by the Azure Emperor? Could it be that I truly have to look for Fairy Qingmei?" Qin Wentian bitterly smiled. As a nameless nobody, how could he even get an audience with Fairy Qingmei?

Rubbing his interspatial ring, the map of Dicang appeared in his hands. There shouldn't be any mistakes, the place marked on the map should be the Celestial Lake Palace.

"Huh?" At this moment, Qin Wentian's heart trembled. The map of Dicang suddenly began to glow with a resplendent light. Under the cascading starlight, many ancient-looking words appeared on the map's flipside, as it suddenly floated up into the air. The words were all formed by the starlight.

This was the real map that would lead to the secret of the Azure Emperor, Dicang! When the Azure Emperor drew that map, it was merely supposed to act as a cover. The flipside of the map, which was totally blank before, was actually the real map! Only under the intense radiance of starlight from the celestial pool would the ancient words show themselves.

Such a discovery left Qin Wentian thunderstruck.

“Art of the Nine Astrarium.” Qin Wentian breathed as he gazed at the floating underside of the map of Dicang. This was a cultivation art, a beyond heavenly-defying cultivation art that would enable one to cultivate up to nine Yuanfus.

The secret of the Azure Emperor, was real!

Qin Wentian studied the map with seriousness as he imprinted the words into his mind. Currently, great waves billowed about in his heart; everyone in the cultivation world could only cultivate a single Yuanfu, but users of the Art of Nine Astrarium were required to cultivate a total of nine Yuanfus.

Not only that, this art could only be cultivated when one was still in the Arterial Circulation Realm. The user must cultivate their first Yuanfu according to the methods stated in the cultivation art, after which, such a Yuanfu would eventually birth a second Yuanfu, while the second Yuanfu would birth a third Yuanfu.

The number of Yuanfus directly correlated to the numbers of

Astral Souls a cultivator has. Usually, at the Yuanfu Realm, ordinary cultivators would condense a total of three Astral Souls. This meant that if one lacked the talent, one would be stuck in the Yuanfu Realm. With only three Astral Souls, at most they would only be able to cultivate three Yuanfus.

Other than this, after the Astral Souls were placed within the Yuanfus to be nurtured, that particular Yuanfu would only be able to absorb Astral Energy directly from the constellation the Astral Soul was condensed from. For example, if Qin Wentian chose to nurture the Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul into his first Yuanfu, he would only be able to absorb the Astral Energy that emanated out from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation. This also applied to Astral Light that was converted into Astral Energy by his Heavenly Hammer Astral Soul.

“After I master the Art of Nine Astrarium, I would then have three Yuanfus when I’m at the Yuanfu Realm. In this case, wouldn’t that mean the amount of Astral Energy I possess would be three times more, compared to others?” Qin Wentian trembled with anticipation.

Wouldn’t it be an extremely simple thing for him to slaughter Yuanfu level opponents just by stepping into Yuanfu?

During that time, if he wanted to kill Ye Wuque, it would be akin to squashing an ant. How could he not be excited about this?

With these thoughts in mind, Qin Wentian immediately started on his cultivation. It was very clear to him that there was no other place in this world that would be better suited to cultivate the Art

of Nine Astrarium. Perhaps, this piece of map wasn't drawn by Dicang, but rather, he had discovered it within this place instead. This may also be the real reason why Fairy Qingmei wanted to claim possession of the place, building the Celestial Lake Palace to monopolise the celestial lake.

If that was the case, it further reaffirmed his earlier conjecture that Azure Emperor Dicang had never broken up with Fairy Qingmei at all. Everything was a farce orchestrated by them, both suffering so much emotionally, taking numerous actions borne of necessity before everyone would believe that Fairy Qingmei hated the Azure Emperor to the core. The story of what exactly happened back then, would definitely be an extremely moving tale.

Qin Wentian didn't know that at this very moment, Fairy Qingmei was watching his every move. After the passage of a few thousand years, a suitable successor had finally appeared!

AGM 192 – Qing`er

After Qin Wentian, Ouyang Kuangsheng and the four others entered the tempest, the remaining cultivators wreaked devastation upon each other for the Stellar Fruits in Wang Xiao's possession. After the battle, the clan members who had accompanied Wang Xiao, alongside twenty other cultivators, were all dead.

Even Yao Sheng from the Skydemon Sect, and Shiki from the Beast King Hall, were both seriously injured.

Regardless, the other cultivators were still unable to prevent Wang Xiao from entering the tempest. Upon entering the tempest, he turned his head to gaze at them, flashing a look that left a chill in everyone's hearts.

The followers of Wang Xiao had all died, and he was most definitely incensed. Wang Xiao's hatred for them should be soaring the skies, so if looks could kill, they would all already be dead.

Wang Xiao also arrived at the celestial lake, and proceeded to step into the last available celestial pool. The other cultivators could only dejectedly make their way back. All seven available spots had been filled up, and so the tests of the Refinement Grounds they participated in were all over.

Qin Wentian was totally ignorant of the events happening in the outside world. He immersed himself completely into his cultivation.

On the 6th day after entering the celestial pool, the nine arterial pathways in his body had finally expanded to their limits. His arterial pathways spun as they transformed into a spiralling whirlpool, boundless Astral Energy flooding every fibre of his being. In the place where his nine arterial pathways intersected, a terrifying vortex was formed, causing rumbling sounds to echo from his body.

In the heart of the vortex, the Astral Energy within his body converted into Yuan droplets, each drop flowing towards the whirlpool, causing its outline to appear stronger and stronger.

As the whirlpool was completely formed, a receptacle appeared and the Yuan energy droplets unceasingly dripped into it, forming a Yuan Ocean. That was the basic form of a Yuanfu, the birth of a Yuanfu.

As the shape of evolving Yuanfu gradually formed, the whirlpool seemed intent on continuing its circulation. On the contrary, the speed in which it spun only grew increasingly faster. At the same time, a terrifying stream of Astral Energy surged frenziedly towards the third Astral Gate in Qin Wentian's sea of consciousness, attempting to unlock it. Qin Wentian was currently dividing his objectives by doing two things at the same time. Not only must he establish his Yuanfu, he wanted to unlock his third Astral Gate as well. This was all because he needed to condense his third Astral Soul.

By condensing his third Astral Soul at the moment he stepped into Yuanfu, only then would he be able to separate his Yuanfu

into three foundations, as instructed by the Art of Nine Astrarium. Qin Wentian didn't want to miss this perfect opportunity.

Undoubtedly, the abundance of Astral Energy made this place the most suitable for Qin Wentian, who was attempting to unlock his Astral Gate. The success rate was many times higher compared to using Yuan Meteor Stones. And indeed, after several breaths of time, as he sent his consciousness towards the third Astral Gate, it was successfully unlocked.

And because of the existence of the beast spirits, Qin Wentian was quickly able to sense the respective constellations of the demonic beasts within the Heavenly Layers.

Qin Wentian had long made his decision on which third Astral Soul he should condense. His choice was undoubtedly the one ranked first in the Warbeast Index - the Demon Sovereign Constellation! Because of this, Qin Wentian didn't even bother attempting to reach out to the 6th Heavenly Layer.

The Demon Sovereign Astral Soul was ranked first in the Warbeast Index, and from this, one could already see how tyrannical it was. It didn't need to be said how beneficial it would be to Qin Wentian in his cultivation of the Fiend Transformation Art. Therefore, he was certain that condensing an Astral Soul from the Demon Sovereign Constellation was the best possible choice.

Very quickly, Qin Wentian's consciousness appeared in front of the Demon Sovereign Constellation. Incomparably savage and violent waves of Astral Energy gushed out, tinged heavily with terrifying demonic Qi. At the same time, an overbearing and

imposing aura emanated forth from the Demon Sovereign Constellation.

With no hesitation whatsoever, Qin Wentian immediately chose to form an innate connection with the constellation, causing columns of Astral Light to cascade downwards, shining onto Qin Wentian's body. After a few breaths of time, an illusory manifestation of his third Astral Soul shining with resplendent light, could be seen shimmering on top of his head. After which, he released all three of his Astral Souls, as three beams of Astral Light cascaded downwards, channelled directly into the currently developing Yuanfu of Qin Wentian.

The whirlpool formed by his nine arterial pathways madly began to refine these three beams of Astral Energy, converting them into tri-colored liquid form, flowing into the Yuan Ocean. Three different colours of Yuan droplets condensed into tri-coloured droplets. Three different kinds of energy, all completely unique, flowing into three separate locations. As his Yuanfus took form, they eventually formed three Yuan Oceans, filling up the three receptacles.

This transformation continued unabated. Qin Wentian silently mused; if this miraculous place – the celestial lake - didn't exist, it would be exceedingly difficult to find other appropriate places with the right conditions for him to cultivate the Art of Nine Astrarium.

An unknown amount of time passed as Qin Wentian finally opened his eyes. Although he was still immersed in the celestial pool, he felt extremely fatigued. His mental constitution was

thoroughly exhausted.

“Success!” A radiant smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s face. Keeping the map of Dicang, he drew in a deep breath, closing his eyes as he sensed the changes in his body. Within his body, three Yuanfus were situated within, the tri-colored Yuan droplets filled Qin Wentian with an unprecedented, overwhelming sense of power that seemed inexhaustible. With a slight intention of his will, his body floated up into the air. He could finally soar through the skies with the power of his cultivation base alone.

“What a marvellous sensation.” Qin Wentian laughed. He had gained much from this trip to the Demon Continent. Now, he only needed to spend more time to familiarise himself with this realm, as well as to consolidate his cultivation.

Qin Wentian initially had still wanted to continue on with his cultivation, however, the radiance of the shimmering starlight in the celestial pool was already fading as the Astral Energy within grew weaker and weaker. Inclining his head, Qin Wentian discovered that Ouyang Kuangsheng and Mo Qingcheng had already exited their celestial pools and were currently looking in his direction.

Not only that, a silhouette actually appeared on top of one of the astral stone pillars. It was none other than the ephemeral beauty that stood beside the Palace Mistress previously.

Her demeanor was still as cold and aloof as before, her aura extraordinary and pristine, appearing as though she was someone not of the mortal world.

“Time’s up.” Her voice was icy cool, as she lowered her head, shooting a glance in the direction of Qin Wentian.

“So fast?” A disappointed smile appeared on Qin Wentian’s face, he felt that the time was too short. He initially wanted to consolidate his cultivation here and wanted to make use of the excessive Astral Energy to unlock even more fragments of memories from the tiny astral-being in his sea of consciousness. It was naturally understandable that he would be depressed after all; cultivating a day in the celestial pool far surpassed cultivating ten days in the outside world.

However, looking at the expression shown on the face of that ephemeral beauty, Qin Wentian knew that it was impossible. Coming out of his celestial pool, he glanced at Mo Qingcheng as he asked with a smile, “How was it? Did your cultivation base improve?”

“Mhm, I broke through to the second level of Yuanfu.” Mo Qingcheng sweetly smiled back as she nodded her head.

“Haha, it seems like everyone benefited this time round.” Ouyang Kuangsheng laughed. He has also broken through to Yuanfu and was exceptionally joyful at this moment. Not only him, even those from the Mystic Moon Hall had smiles on their faces.

“However, that fellow Wang Xiao has also broken through to Yuanfu. He just left not long ago, but still you have to be cautious of this man in the future. The power of the Wang Clan from the

War Continent cannot be belittled. A few years from now, after he matures, Wang Xiao will most definitely be a voice of authority within his clan,” Ouyang Kuangsheng warned.

The transcendent powers of the nine continents were all incredibly powerful, regardless of whether they were sects or clans. Especially for those elites of the younger generation, if one’s talent was dazzling enough, one would be recognised and nurtured, eventually becoming a pillar of the clan. By that time, they would wield true authority, but of course, to reach that point they would first have to shine brighter than their peers, attracting the attentions of the upper echelons.

If not, death is the only outcome. For those at the top, deaths of members from the younger generations were nothing to them. Either you stand out, or you are eliminated in the struggle for the top. This was the harsh reality and environment that those younger generations from the transcendent powers had to grow up in.

“Noted.” Qin Wentian nodded.

“Let’s go,” the ephemeral beauty coolly exclaimed, as she leapt downwards, leading the way out of the Refinement Grounds. Their journey here was filled with difficulties, but upon returning, their way was smooth of all impediments, allowing them to proceed unhindered. After some moments, they arrived back at the hall situated outside the entrance of the celestial lake.

“Ouyang.” Jiang Ting and the rest were already there, waiting. Upon seeing his safe return, a warm smile blossomed on her face.

“She’s Jiang Ting, my fiancée.” Ouyang Kuangsheng smiled as he spoke to Qin Wentian.

“Jiang Ting, this is my friend, Qin Wentian.”

Qin Wentian looked towards Jiang Ting as he nodded with a smile. From Ouyang’s words, he already knew that Jiang Ting was from the Jiang Clan, and was similarly a transcendent power that had great influence in the Wind Continent.

Jiang Ting silently contemplated Qin Wentian. From what she knew of Ouyang Kuangsheng’s character, his decision to be friends with Qin Wentian was already sufficient to show how extraordinary the latter was.

After which, she politely smiled back as she returned the nod, her posture graceful and befitting the noble lady of a great clan.

“Hey, thanks for the hospitality shown to us by the Celestial Lake Palace. Farewell.” Ouyang Kuangsheng turned his head back, as he spoke to the ephemeral young lady. However, she remained aloof and indifferent, not bothering to reply. Feeling helpless, Ouyang Kuangsheng and his group of people could only lead their demonic beasts away as they departed the area.

Outside the Celestial Lake Palace, as the remaining survivors bid their farewells to each other. Qin Wentian politely waved his goodbye to those from the Mystic Moon Hall, while he and Mo Qingcheng mounted on her white crane, flying away.

The veiled lady of the Mystic Moon Hall gazed at the departing silhouette of the white crane, as an expression akin to reluctance could be seen passing through her eyes.

“Let’s go,” she lightly commanded. After a while, they mounted their demonic beasts, and in similar fashion, departed the Demon Continent.

Within another hall, Fairy Qingmei sat there, as the Palace Mistress stood by her side. At that moment, the ephemeral beauty made her way over.

“How was it, do you like him?” Fairy Qingmei inquired in a low voice upon seeing the appearance of the cold-looking young lady.

“I’ve no idea.” The young lady lightly shook her head, while hints of obedience could be seen on her face. Only in front of Fairy Qingmei, would she present such an appearance.

“It doesn’t matter if you don’t like him, but I need you to stay by his side and to protect him from danger. Qing`er, remember this: you must not let him come to any harm.” Fairy Qingmei laughed, causing waves of jealousy to rock the heart of the Palace Mistress standing next to her. Their teacher only displayed such expressions of gentleness in front of Qing`er.

She knew that Fairy Qingmei doted most on her junior sister. And now that Fairy Qingmei had actually instructed Qing`er to protect that youth earlier, it could be seen how highly her teacher

regarded Qin Wentian.

Fairy Qingmei's devotion to the Azure Emperor, was truly deep indeed.

"Okay." Qing'er's replies were also scarce even when she was talking to her esteemed teacher. However, the look in Fairy Qingmei's eyes was still as gentle as before; she understood Qing'er's personality and naturally wouldn't blame her.

"Don't help him in everything he does, and if he uses flowery words to coax you, ignore him. You can only help when he is in moments of absolute danger, and do not reveal your identity." Fairy Qingmei gently smiled as she instructed.

"Qing'er understands." This was the first time she would be venturing outside, so she carefully took note of Fairy Qingmei's instructions. However, was it true that all men were skilled in the usage of flowery words?

"Go then." Fairy Qingmei smiled. Following which, a pair of beautiful wings appeared on the back of Qing'er while she hovered in the air. Her silhouette flickered, as she instantly disappeared from sight. Who knew what terrifying realm had her speed reached!

AGM 193 – Return

Clouds drifted in the skies above Chu, the warm sunlight shone downwards, warming the land and its inhabitants.

A white crane descended from the skies, flying towards Chu. On the back of the white crane, Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng sat shoulder to shoulder, their clothes fluttering from the gentle breeze.

“We are back.” Qin Wentian looked downwards, his eyes taking in the Royal Capital. This span of two months, felt like an eternity.

This time round for the journey to the Demon Continent, he passed by many countries and had extraordinary experiences. This could be considered the first time Qin Wentian went out to temper himself, as well as his first step on the grand stage that was the Grand Xia Empire.

Over there in the Refinement Grounds of the celestial lake, he discovered the meaning of the idiom, ‘There is always a sky beyond this sky’. For those elite geniuses of Chu, they were merely ordinary people when placed in the grand stage that was the Grand Xia Empire.

Regardless of whether it was Ouyang Kuangsheng or Wang Xiao, any one of them in Chu would be an unrivalled existence for realms below Yuanfu. And not only that, they would probably even be able to fight against ordinary Yuanfu experts.

Even Mu Baifei or the two other Swallow Swordsmen would undoubtedly be able to handle the likes of Sikong Mingyue and Orchon with ease.

In addition, during the trip, Qin Wentian even uncovered the greatest secret of the Azure Emperor, and this was definitely the biggest reward. All in all, the harrowing experiences of the Refinement Grounds may well be an important event in his life.

The white crane swooped downwards, hovering in the air above the Emperor Star Academy. Many raised their heads upwards and upon seeing the white crane of Mo Qingcheng, they couldn't help but stiffen in shock.

After Qin Wentian caused that huge commotion back then, he seemed to have totally vanished without a trace. So, he had spent the two months together with Mo Qingcheng.

No one noticed her disappearance because Mo Qingcheng rarely appeared in the school grounds. As to why Qin Wentian's disappearance was discovered so fast, it was because there was too much attention focused on his every movement, not to mention he had 'disappeared' at such a chaotic time. If it were like other cases where students of the academy 'disappeared', such as leaving Chu to temper themselves, this would be considered extremely normal.

"Wait, what? Why has the academy become like this?" Rage boiling in his heart, Qin Wentian had an extremely ugly expression on his countenance when he noticed that the current Emperor Star Academy was changed almost beyond all recognition.

The white crane flew down to the residence of Qin Wentian and an instant later, Old Gu, Mustang, Luo Huan, Fan Le and Qin Yao all arrived in the courtyard.

“Both of you are finally back.” Old Gu’s eyes flickered with laughter, as he regarded Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng. The current him, appeared many decades older compared to two months ago.

“Grandpa.” Mo Qingcheng’s heart involuntarily trembled, she couldn’t help but notice how feeble Old Gu looked.

“Teacher, what happened to the academy?” Qin Wentian glanced towards Mustang as bewilderment painted his face. Why would the Emperor Star Academy’s appearance have changed so much? Many landscape structures and buildings had been totally decimated, only leaving spots of emptiness behind.

“This was done by Yue Hanshan and the others from the Azure Emperor Palace. In addition to Yue Qingfeng’s death, those from the Azure Emperor Palace couldn’t find what they sought and thus took their anger out on the Emperor Star Academy. Despite turning the academy into this state, they still couldn’t find anything, and since they were still unable to find the murderer of Yue Qingfeng, they could only leave gloomily with their tails between their legs,” Mustang replied, causing a glimmer of cold light to flash in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

Yue Hanshan from the Azure Emperor Palace, he would

remember him.

Yue Hanshan didn't even remotely suspect Qin Wentian. After Yue Qingfeng had injured Qin Wentian from back then, the fact that Qin Wentian was weaker than his son had already sunk deep into his consciousness. How could he still suspect Qin Wentian, then?

And as for whether he suspected the Emperor Star Academy, only Yue Hanshan himself knew. Seeing how much damage he caused to the grounds of the academy, even if he didn't suspect it, it was obvious that Yue Hanshan had also wanted to use the destruction to vent the anger in his heart.

"How's the current state of affairs in the Royal Capital?" Qin Wentian inquired again. Even before he left, their state of affairs already looked extremely grim.

Indeed, upon hearing his question, Mustang knitted his brows as he replied in a heavy voice, "Not that good, the rebel troops led by the Qin Clan were sorely suppressed by the royal armies. The only reason why they haven't won yet was because of the presence of our Emperor Star Academy. Thus, eliminating the threat posed by the academy was at the top of their list. Not only that, considering the support from the Nine Mystical Palace, it could be said that the Emperor Star Academy was currently in an extremely precarious situation."

"On top of that, I have a strong suspicion that aside from the Nine Mystical Palace, there are still representatives of transcendent powers from the Grand Xia Empire hiding in Chu,"

Old Gu added, worry apparent in his eyes. Since he had made this statement, he was naturally confident of his sources.

“Qingcheng, come home with me first, your family misses you,” Old Gu spoke to Qingcheng, as he continued, “As for Wentian, don’t bother yourself with other matters. Just calm your heart and focus on your cultivation.”

“Right.” Qin Wentian and Mo Qingcheng nodded in agreement, as she left with Old Gu. An expression of astonishment appeared on Mustang’s face when he stared at Qin Wentian, as Astral Light glimmered in his eyes. Nodding lightly as though gratified, he didn’t say anything, only giving a pat on Qin Wentian’s shoulders before he departed.

Qin Wentian then turned his gaze onto Luo Huan. His senior sister, Luo Huan, was still as beautiful and sexy as before, yet there seemed to be something lacking from his observations.

Indeed, Luo Huan was no longer brimming with enthusiasm and warmth as compared to back then. In the past her attitude was always frivolous, enjoyed teasing others, and basked in their smiles and laughter.

However, after everything that had happened: the death of Mountain, her good friend of many years, the academies current perilous situation, having to endure Yu Hanshan’s oppression as a student of the Emperor Star Academy. It felt truly unbearable. She could only bury all feelings of unfairness and grievances in her heart, and face the world with a forced smile.

“Sister Luo Huan.” Qin Wentian walked over, and as he neared, he sensed the strong aura of melancholy emanating forth from her. He couldn’t help but lament in his heart, still remembering the day he first met this senior sister of his. In the Sky Harmony City, Luo Huan’s racy figure was dashing atop the city walls, the atmosphere around her as bright as the sun’s warmth.

Walking forward, Qin Wentian pulled Luo Huan into a hug.

After the hug, a familiar teasing smile finally appeared on Luo Huan’s face as she gazed at Qin Wentian. “Smelly brat, how dare you openly take advantage of your Senior Sister in broad daylight?

“Who asked my Senior Sister to be so beautiful.” Qin Wentian laughed.

“Hmph, sweet talker.” Luo Huan rolled her eyes. This Junior Brother of hers had really matured. Even his demeanor and aura felt different.

“Senior Sister~” Fan Le sidled upwards to Luo Huan, spreading his arms apart. With a gentle expression in his clear eyes, it was obvious he also intended to give Luo Huan a hug.

“Damn Fatty, try it if you dare,” Luo Huan coldly snorted. As she looked at Fan Le, a smile that wasn’t quite a smile appeared on her face. A momentary expression of grief crossed his face as he replied, “Senior Sister, how can you show such obvious favouritism?”

“Who asked you not to be as handsome as Junior Brother Qin?” Luo Huan giggled. After exchanging a few more pleasantries, Luo Huan departed. To her, it was already sufficient knowing that Qin Wentian wasn’t in any danger.

Fan Le smiled bitterly, but his eyes soon brightened as he cast a glance towards Qin Wentian. “Hehehe boss, where did you go exactly, and how’s the progress with Miss Mo, the illustrious beauty?”

Upon seeing the shameless look in Fatty’s eyes, Qin Wentian scolded in a low voice as he shifted the topic. “Fatty, what’s the level of your cultivation now?”

“Peak of Arterial Circulation, slower than you by just a teeny weeny step.” Fan Le shrugged, his words causing Qin Wentian to feel astonished. But then again, he remembered Fan Le’s ability that allowed him to see the cultivation of others. This Fatty must have already known that he, Qin Wentian, had already broken through to Yuanfu.

“Then all the more for you to hurry up and cultivate.” Qin Wentian smiled.

“Don’t worry boss, this fatty me is a genius. I’ll catch up to you soon enough.” Shaking the rolls of fat on his body, Fan Le swaggered away. Only then did Qin Wentian turn his gaze towards Qin Yao. “Sister,” he gently called out and embraced her, almost overwhelmed by waves of emotion.

“Enough enough, you’ve already grown up. How can you lose control of your emotions this easily? Let me go make something good for you to eat.” Qin Yao rolled her eyes, still as youthful and beautiful as before.

At this moment, a white blur suddenly dashed by, jumping onto Qin Wentian’s chest.

“Little Rascal!”

“Little fellow, your speed is getting faster and faster.” Qin Wentian patted Little Rascal on its head. But this little fellow didn’t seem to have grown at all. Perhaps he would be able to tell the difference if it transformed.

After returning to the academy, Qin Wentian kept an extremely low profile. He knew that since he had only just stepped into Yuanfu, the most important thing to do would be to consolidate his cultivation base and acclimatize himself with the Yuanfu Realm.

The majority of the Royal Capital didn’t know that Qin Wentian had already returned. He had been gone for a period of time, causing the name Qin Wentian to seem like a distant memory. Regardless of how glorious or brilliant a person’s past achievements were, time would dilute everything. After all, the people living in the Royal Capital had their own matters to deal with, their own life to live. Only if Qin Wentian appeared once again in their midst, would they recall his existence.

In the blink of an eye, another half a month passed. There would be many clashes of a minor scale happening off and on again in the Royal Capital, with the most frequent being none other than the bloody disputes between the Royal Academy and the Emperor Star Academy.

Sake Street was the name of a street located in the Royal Capital, filled with inns and restaurants. The pathway of this street was tens of thousands of metres long and was extremely wide. Rows and rows of inns and restaurants of at least two stories high stood at both sides of the streets and many loved to spend their time here either drinking, making merry on the balconies, or gazing at the milling crowd below in the streets. Wasn't this a simple kind of joy, as well?

Sake Street was situated very near to the Emperor Star Academy, but currently this street was already monopolised by the Royal Academy. They stayed there directly, using its prime location to monitor the movements of the Emperor Star Academy.

At this moment, on the balcony of a certain restaurant, Ye Ran from the Ye Clan, and Elder You from the Royal Academy, were drinking their wine. At the same table with them were several other young men, one of them cloaked in white. He was none other than Ye Wuque. He was still filled with elegance, with an extraordinary bearing.

“Wuque, congratulations on breaking through to the second level of Yuanfu.” Elder You toasted Ye Wuque, silently admiring. This young man before him was currently ranked fourth among the ten prodigies of the Royal Capital. Back then, even before his

breakthrough, he was already capable of defeating Qiu Mo, the formerly ranked number four. Now, he had obviously gotten even stronger after stepping into the second level of Yuanfu.

“I took so long to break through to the next level, there’s nothing worthy of congratulations. However, we should be congratulating Sikong instead, since he has already broken through to Yuanfu.” Ye Wuque smiled as he glanced at Sikong Mingyue sitting by his side.

Sikong Mingyue face showed neither expressions of happiness nor joy . He was still as calm as ever, continuing to drink toast after toast with Ye Wuque and the rest, yet a look of incredible sharpness could be seen flashing in his eyes.

In order for him to recover from his injuries, Xiao Lan paid an extremely huge price. Who would have thought that after recovering, Sikong Mingyue would turn that disaster into a blessing, and breakthrough to Yuanfu.

Back then, his body was devastated by Qin Wentian. How could he ever forget that humiliation? Now that Sikong Mingyue had already broken through to Yuanfu and had condensed quite a powerful Astral Soul, he truly wanted to have a showdown once more with Qin Wentian. Even if Qin Wentian were to break through to Yuanfu, he was still confident that he would be the one standing in the end.

How detestable that Qin Wentian had vanished without a trace. And as for that rumor that he was already back, no one knew for certain whether it was true or false.

AGM 194 - Rising Wind

Qin Wentian spent these past few days quietly in cultivation, keeping an extremely low profile. After the lesson learnt from the last assassination attempt, he knew that prevention was always better than a cure. If it weren't for his powerful physique, he would already be dead.

But who was the assassin? Was he from the Nine Mystical Palace, Ou Clan, Ye Clan or the Royal Clan?

There was completely no way to investigate. All traces and clues that could have been garnered, were all wiped away with the assassin's death.

To Qin Wentian, the only matter of paramount importance was raising his own powers through cultivation.

Inside his courtyard, he slowly opened his eyes. A faint demonic presence emanated from him, now that he had condensed an Astral Soul from the Demon Sovereign Constellation. Absorbing vast quantities of Astral Energy which were tinged heavily by the demonic Qi, he had met the requirements to cultivate the further levels of the Fiend Transformation Art.

“Boss.” Fan Le walked over. Qin Wentian turned his gaze onto Fan Le as he asked, “Are you slacking off again?”

“Naw, I don't slack,” Fan Le said with a straight face before continuing, “Teacher Mustang wants us to go clear out a street. Do

you wanna come along?” Fan Le grinned.

“Clear out a street?” Qin Wentian’s eyes narrowed.

“Yeah, recently those from the Royal Academy have been encroaching on our former territory. Back then, when those from the Azure Emperor Palace were still around, the academy could only silently put up with it. Now that they’re gone, the academy decided to launch a sneak attack, clearing out those Royal Academy riffraff away from Sake Street,” Fan Le explained.

“Those from the Royal Academy actually dared to act so brazenly?” A cold glint of light could be seen flickering in Qin Wentian’s eyes.

“They only know how to depend on those representatives from the transcendent powers. I wonder where they’re from, since each of them are in control of one region and our Emperor Star Academy won’t dare to act rashly. Teacher says that most likely, all of them are from the Nine Mystical Palace and they wanted to push our Emperor Star Academy into a dead end,” Fan Le replied. Qin Wentian then stood up, “I will go along with you all.”

“Mmm, okay and don’t worry, I’m here with orders from Teacher. This time around, we have to teach those bastards from the Royal Academy a lesson they’ll remember.” Fan Le grinned as anticipation flashed on his face. There should be Yuanfu level experts from the higher echelons of their academy participating in the operation, as well.

Qin Wentian and Fan Le quickly gathered at a previously designated meeting point, a location randomly found in the Emperor Star Academy. Upon noting their arrivals, Mustang spoke, “Disperse and proceed, we will gather at Sake Street. Wentian, you will go together with me.”

“Roger.” Everyone nodded, as they departed in batches. This way, they wouldn’t attract unnecessary attention.

.....

Over at Sake Street, Ye Wuque, who was currently enjoying his drink, glanced downwards as an expression of misgiving appeared on his face.

“Look over there, those people may be a little troublesome to handle.”

Ye Ran and Elder You narrowed their eyes as though they also sensed something.

“Spread this to everyone, those from the Emperor Star Academy have arrived,” Ye Wuque commanded. As his command was disseminated, the whole Sake Street became busy. Some of the customers with no affiliation to the situation, quietly sat within the restaurant, minding their own business. They didn’t dare to offend either party and could only be spectators.

Diagonally opposite to the restaurant Ye Wuque was in, a group of figures appeared. Upon seeing this group of people, Ye Wuque and Sikong Mingyue’s countenances stiffened.

“Mustang, Qin Wentian.”

“Indeed, Qin Wentian’s injuries have all healed, and the rumors were true. He has returned.”

A terrifying sharp light glinted in Sikong Mingyue’s eyes, as his killing intent pierced towards the direction of Qin Wentian. However, Sikong Mingyue soon laughed coldly when he realized that Qin Wentian didn’t even notice his killing intent.

Group after group of people walked out from the other restaurant, and very swiftly, waves of strong battle intent surged out as both sides of the street soon resembled a battlefield, with opponents standing on either side.

“Kill” A low voice echoed amidst the surging battle intent, and cultivators on both sides started to engage in killing frenzies. The cultivation base of these people were at the 7th level of Arterial Circulation, at the very least, and ranged all the way up to the 2nd level of Yuanfu. Words were unnecessary as the clashes started directly. Upon seeing this, Qin Wentian understood that the enmity of both sides had already reached a point of no return. No side would rest until the other was completely annihilated.

“Sister Luo Huan has also broken through to Yuanfu.” Qin Wentian glanced at Luo Huan who gave the impression of a female Asura, aiming for sure-kills with every strike of her attacks, showing no mercy. It was as though all the melancholy and depression bottled up in her was being unleashed in the form of

violence.

“Wuque.” Ye Ran turned his gaze towards Ye Wuque. It was obvious that their opponents came prepared for this battle. Although their reinforcements were on the way, the Emperor Star Academy had many powerful experts rushing over, as well.

Boom! On the roof of a certain restaurant, a powerful expert descended from the skies. This person was robed in black, an extremely bloodthirsty aura could be felt gushing from him as he turned his gaze downwards to the clashes below in the street.

However, after he appeared, another figure also descended onto the roof of the restaurant directly opposite him. Calmly standing there, the new arrival, who was an old man, emitted a powerful aura that didn't lose out to the man robed in black.

The two of them made no movements, as they stared at each other. Obviously, they could feel the threat of each other's power.

Crumbling sounds rang out as the roofs of the restaurants they were standing on disintegrated into dust, no longer able to withstand their powerful auras. Despite this, they remained standing in the air, motionlessly locking their gazes with each other, each appearing as calm as before.

A fearsome whirlwind manifested due to the equally powerful auras blasting against each other.

BOOM! The black robed man stepped forth, punching out as a black-colored windstorm manifested in the air before him. However, his opponent remained calmly standing there. The long white beard of his opponent, fluttered about in the wind, and at the instant when the black robed man closed the distance, the old man slammed forwards with a palm strike, causing tens of millions of palm shadows to descend from the skies. In response, the black robed man coldly laughed as he channeled more of his energy into the windstorm, causing it to strengthen in intensity.

A terrifying aura of destruction devastated their surroundings, as numerous inns and restaurants collapsed. The entire street was in a similar state as it bore the brunt of the attacks from the Stellar Martial Cultivators. The spectators and onlookers frantically retreated to a far enough location, their hearts shuddering as they gazed upon the piles of rubble, so different compared to the luxurious street of just a few minutes ago.

“Experts at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, so it seems like this is not going to be a minor clash.” Many were quaking in their boots. Flying-type demonic beasts could be seen up in the air, as endless waves of experts kept arriving in a rush, reinforcing their respective academy.

It was as though a small-scale battle had set off a chain reaction, as this was quickly escalating to a full blown war.

The restaurant Ye Wuque was in hadn't been demolished yet. At the moment, he was still leisurely drinking wine as he shot a cold glance in Mustang's direction. “Mustang, are you trying to incite a war?”

Upon hearing his voice, Qin Wentian turned his gaze over, glancing at Ye Wuque. He had long heard of Ye Wuque's name. Over a year ago, the reason why Autumn Snow reneged on their engagement, was precisely because of Ye Wuque.

After which, he had met Ye Wuque on several occasions, and from Ye Wuque's indifferent attitude, Qin Wentian could tell that he was an extremely proud and arrogant man.

Mustang couldn't be bothered about Ye Wuque. Although Ye Wuque was considered powerful, if considering their statuses, Ye Wuque was merely a junior. Ye Wuque's way of speaking held no trace of politeness in them at all, so naturally Mustang wasn't going to reply.

"Hmph, he's really good at acting." Ye Ran faintly laughed. Looking at Ye Wuque, he stated, "Wuque, based on your current cultivation base, the 2nd level of Yuanfu, as well as your cultivation speed, soon that Elder from the Emperor Star Academy will be unable to be your opponent."

The Elder Ye Ran was referring to was naturally Mustang. However, Qin Wentian was somewhat shocked when he heard that Ye Wuque had already broken through to the 2nd level of Yuanfu.

"Competing with him?" Ye Wuque laughed as he glanced at Mustang. "Meaningless."

"Indeed, he's a full generation ahead of you after all." Ye Ran's

words contained hints of fawning in them. After all, Ye Wuque held an extraordinary position in the Ye Clan. Even though he was an Elder, his authority couldn't be compared to Ye Wuque. Not to mention that the current power level of Ye Wuque was no longer considered weaker when compared to him.

Mustang paid no attention to them as he laughed. Looking at the Qin Wentian in front of him, he felt extremely gratified in his heart. Mustang's Astral Soul was condensed from the Heavenly Vision Constellation, he had naturally discovered that Qin Wentian had also broken through to the Yuanfu Realm.

Back then, when Qin Wentian was still at the Arterial Circulation Realm, he could jump levels and defeat his opponents, regardless of whether they were shocking geniuses like Sikong Mingyue or Luo Qianqiu. Previously at the Arterial Circulation Realm, he could already defend for a time against the Yuanfu-level Ye Wuque. Now that he had stepped into Yuanfu, based on Qin Wentian's historical growth, it wouldn't take too long for him to trample Ye Wuque under his feet.

As for Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian had long disregarded this trash.

"I'm already old, there's a limit to my accomplishments. However Wentian, you are different. You don't need to care too much about these so called 'geniuses' of Chu, just treat them as ordinary people. You have to broaden your perspective, and not limit your horizons, as there's no need to compete with them."

Mustang spoke to Qin Wentian, guiding and instructing him.

However, was that also not a form of reply to Ye Wuque? He was telling Qin Wentian to widen his perspectives and there was no need to compete with them; obviously this was a slap to Ye Wuque and his comrades, implying that they did not have the qualifications to be compared to Qin Wentian.

Indeed, upon hearing Mustang's words, Ye Wuque's eyes narrowed as a sharp glint of light flashed in them. Ye Ran then glanced at Mustang, as he coldly laughed. "What a shameless boast, truly ridiculous."

"Time has passed so swiftly, indeed. Back then, when I was in the Sky Harmony City, you had just started on the pathway of cultivation. At that time, I had already discovered you when you were in the Bai Clan, and you were merely at the Body Refinement Realm then. Even I didn't dare to trust my eyes when I saw your current cultivation level. I'm truly gratified, and I imagine that the Bai Clan must be filled with countless regrets now."

Mustang was extremely moved. However, from the tone of his voice, Qin Wentian could sense traces of hurt within. He suddenly thought of the death of Mountain, which brought him to a sudden realization that Mustang may have intentions to sacrifice his life in order to seek revenge today. Mountain was the adopted son of Mustang, whom he had raised from a child to man. Back when Qin Wentian was pursuing the killers, he was blocked by the Yuanfu level Ye Wuque. Mustang must have learnt of this from Rain or Luo Huan.

Thinking of this, Qin Wentian's heart trembled slightly. Without a doubt, Teacher Mustang wanted to kill Ye Wuque today.

Yes, he was definitely right. Today, Mustang came for the death of Ye Wuque.

Thinking of the deaths of Zi Jun and Mountain, the glint of light flickering in Qin Wentian's eyes grew sharper and sharper.

The clashes occurring in the street became increasingly ferocious in intensity, as expert after expert rushed over, reinforcing their respective academies. The matter had already turned from a small-scale clash into a large-scale war, and not only that, Qin Wentian also noticed the arrival of Xiao Lan and the others.

Xiao Lǔ, Wu Chong, Wang Teng. All of them were here.

As for the other spectators, they had long vacated the area, not wanting to be embroiled in the madness.

At this moment, Sikong Mingyue strode forth, soaring upwards as he stood in the air. This undoubtedly proved that Sikong Mingyue had already broken through to Yuanfu.

A malevolent killing intent poured out from him as he pointed his finger at Qin Wentian "Qin Wentian, GET THE F*** OVER HERE. Fight me if you dare."

AGM 195 - Sikong Courting Death

Sikong Mingyue's desire to battle soared, as he flew towards the restaurant Qin Wentian was in.

Fight, he definitely had to wash clean the slate of humiliation he received back then. Only by killing Qin Wentian would he be able to regain his previous confidence and untie the knot in his heart.

Xiao Lan, Ye Wuque, Xiao Lǔ all turned their heads in the direction of Qin Wentian. Although back then, Qin Wentian's assassination wasn't part of their calculations, Qin Wentian had actually survived even after getting stabbed through the heart!

However, despite hearing Sikong Mingyue's arrogant words, Qin Wentian remained quietly seated, silently savoring his wine, treating Sikong Mingyue as though he was thin air.

"Teacher, we should just let go of matters of the past. We should always look forwards, and not allow history to lock us down." Qin Wentian could sense the heaviness of Mustang's heart. He was very worried that Mustang would impulsively choose to sacrifice himself.

Mustang raised his head as he cast a glance at Qin Wentian. To think that his intentions had been discovered by this student of his. Laughing, he replied, "You are right, we should look forwards. However, there are some debts that must be collected no matter what."

The teacher and student duo chatted as though they were all alone, the chaotic battles unfurling in the skies and on the ground incapable of drawing their attentions. Even Sikong Mingyue's provocation was also ignored.

This caused Sikong Mingyue's countenance to turn extremely ugly. The battle intent emanating forth from him increased in strength, and with a swing of his hands, waves of ancient slaughter word-imprints blasted out, targeting the space above Mustang and Qin Wentian.

As a deafening sound rang out, the roof of the restaurant Mustang and Qin Wentian were in, instantly crumbled into pieces, leaving nothing but the skies above them.

At that moment, several figures could be seen standing protectively around Mustang and Qin Wentian. What's more, they were all floating in the air. Rain was within the group of protectors, who were none other than the Yuanfu-level students sent by the Emperor Star Academy to ensure the duo's safety. They could see Xiao Lan and the rest eyeing Qin Wentian like a tiger eyeing its prey and thus had mobilized a force of Yuanfu cultivators to protect him.

After that last lesson learnt from the assassination attempt, the Emperor Star Academy would never allow Qin Wentian to participate in such a chaotic battle again.

"Seems like I've overestimated you." Sikong Mingyue swept his gaze towards those from the Emperor Star Academy, as a faint smile etched on his face. Since Qin Wentian didn't dare to step out,

he wouldn't allow himself to be angered by this. However, with the events unfolding today, it would be impossible to even if Qin Wentian didn't want to take action.

It was as though Qin Wentian hadn't even heard Sikong Mingyue's provocation. In actuality, when he heard Sikong Mingyue's challenging him earlier, he couldn't even be bothered reacting. Although Sikong Mingyue's combat prowess could be considered incredible, Qin Wentian understood his own strength very clearly. The current him should be able to finish off Sikong Mingyue with absurd ease.

Thus, Qin Wentian, didn't even consider Sikong Mingyue as a worthy opponent. But naturally, this was not the only reason Qin Wentian took no action. Killing Sikong Mingyue would be equivalent to squashing an ant for him. The reason why he didn't do so was because he would rather sit down with his teacher Mustang, drinking wine and chatting leisurely.

Upon hearing the gloomy undertone in Mustang's words, Qin Wentian felt somewhat disappointed in his heart. If it weren't for Mustang back then, how could there be a Qin Wentian today? He was a student of Mustang, yet being unable to help, left him with a bitter feeling in his heart.

"Teacher." Qin Wentian no longer tried to persuade him, and continued pouring the wine for Mustang, as both teacher and student downed cup after cup of wine, to their heart's content.

"In my lifetime, the thing that allowed me to feel the most pride was accepting all of you as my students. Although in the end, I

didn't give much guidance to everyone, especially you. I didn't even accomplish what a good teacher should have done." Mustang lowered his cup as he smiled at Qin Wentian. After which, he slowly stood up, his gaze sharpening, as it shifted over towards Ye Wuque, Wu Chong, Wang Teng, Xiao Lan and the rest.

At this moment, Mustang's eyes felt as sharp as swords, his gaze alone seemed as though it would be able to penetrate their very souls. An intense, murderous aura gushed out from him.

Not only did he want to kill Ye Wuque, he wanted to do the same to the three beside him as well. If it weren't for Xiao Lan, the Royal Academy wouldn't have the guts to escalate the conflict between the academies, very quickly leading to the decisive battle that would determine the overall victor.

However, it was very clear to Mustang regarding the high difficulty of killing Xiao Lan. Firstly, not including Xiao Lan's combat prowess, the power he represented was sufficient to suppress the Emperor Star Academy. The Xiao Faction of the Nine Mystical Palace gave off the feeling of mountains pressing against the academy. Although the academy had issued a death warrant for Chu Tianjiao, he knew that they still didn't dare to go overboard regarding Xiao Lan. If anything untowards happened to him, the power supporting him may very well decide to eradicate the entire Emperor Star Academy.

This was agonising, yet also a reality. If Xiao Lan was killed, the only thing waiting to 'welcome' the Emperor Star Academy, would be the intense fury of the Nine Mystical Palace's anger.

The nearby buildings were demolished one by one, causing endless heartache to the business owners. However, in the face of these two great powers, they could only bear it all in silence.

In the airspace above Sake Street, other than the two 3rd level Yuanfu experts from both academies, two more exceedingly powerful, aged figures appeared. Both stood in the air, facing off against each other. Their auras were akin to the majestic mountains, giving off a feeling that they were immovable. Their sudden appearance indicated that they had long been hiding in this region, only choosing to show themselves for this moment. The Royal Academy had long since completed their preparations and were ready to attack the Emperor Star Academy at any time. So rather than waiting to be attacked, the Emperor Star Academy decided to bring forward the unavoidable battle.

“They are truly well prepared.” Xiao Lan swept his gaze towards the four powerhouses in the air. Sounds of booming rang out, along with tremendous shockwaves, as the buildings around them were demolished and turned into rubble.

Xiao Lan’s eyes were filled with killing intent.

Since the Emperor Star Academy wanted to move up the battle, he might as well comply. After all, he too hoped that this matter would be settled as soon as possible.

The departure of the Azure Emperor Palace gradually caused Xiao Lan to lose his patience. Could it be that the secret of the Azure Emperor truly was not hidden in the Emperor Star Academy?

“I want Qin Wentian alive, but show no mercy to the others,” Xiao Lan calmly commanded. He faintly sensed that there were some secrets Qin Wentian was hiding.

As the sound of Xiao Lan faded, the cultivators around him stepped forth. An instant later, numerous dazzling Astral Souls appeared, causing the area to be inundated with Astral Light.

The crown prince of Snowcloud, Xiao Lǚ, also joined the fray. This was the first time he had done so, illusory forms of his Astral Souls appearing above his head, glowing with exceptional brilliance. His Astral Souls were actually condensed from zither-type Constellations.

Sounds of a melodious tune drifted out, forming a musical note. The soundwaves shaped a visible net, enveloping Xiao Lǚ and his allies. It was as though the music were able to increase their combat abilities.

The abilities of Wang Teng, Wu Chong, Sikong Mingyue, were all buffed up, as their auras became increasingly stronger.

A raging wind billowed by, as the reinforcements for the Emperor Star Academy arrived. The leaders of the Skydemon and Asura Faction, Xanxus and Du Yidao, were here personally; they had been paying close attention to Xiao Lǚ, and thus were able to react quickly. Swiftly after, both parties began clashing against each other.

“Du Yidao also broke through.” The strength of the aura that Du Yidao currently emitted, was at the 3rd level of Yuanfu.

Mustang, who had stood up, released his Astral Souls as he walked towards Ye Wuque.

Ye Wuque, in turn, also released his own Astral Souls. Although he was arrogant, he wouldn't underestimate his opponents, especially not when his opponent was an elder from the Emperor Star Academy. Although Mustang's talent couldn't be compared to himself, he was someone who had been in the Yuanfu Realm for many years, and should have several special techniques up his sleeves.

Not only that, Mustang's cultivation base was at the peak of the 3rd level of Yuanfu, the same realm as some of the top talented elite students.

An instant later, both of them were engaged in battle, each radiating a terrifying killing intent. Mustang's attacks were more 'tempered', while Ye Wuque's attacks were backed by his pride and determination. Naturally, Ye Wuque was obviously at a disadvantage.

Qin Wentian stood there, silently spectating the battle between Mustang and Ye Wuque. Seeing how Mustang, at the risk of suffering multiple grievous injuries to himself, went all out to kill Ye Wuque, he could empathize even more with Mustang's feelings. Qin Wentian stood there motionlessly, watching the battle play out. He didn't want any accidents to befall Mustang.

Many people were watching the war between the two academies from afar. The names of Xiao Lan and Qin Wentian were the greatest lure of attention. Although these two weren't the strongest in terms of their cultivation bases, they had already been viewed as the representative of both powers.

Xiao Lan from the Nine Mystical Palace; Qin Wentian, from the Emperor Star Academy. Currently the existence of the Nine Mystical Palace was no longer a secret in Chu. Xiao Lan was a representative from that awe-inspiring transcendent power.

And not only that, Xiao Lan had issued a command - to capture Qin Wentian alive, while the others could be killed without mercy.

"You are still in the mood for idling?" Sikong Mingyue hadn't joined the combat with the rest. In his heart, he was seized by a strong obsession. He had to defeat Qin Wentian.

However, at that moment, a figure cloaked in black abruptly appeared soundlessly behind Qin Wentian, as though that unknown figure had always been there.

Obviously, the Emperor Star Academy wouldn't allow an incident like the last assassination to occur again. They had arranged protection for Qin Wentian.

Sikong Mingyue's gaze stiffened, staring at the black figure as his countenance turned unsightly. Could it be that despite everything, he still couldn't make a move against Qin Wentian today?

“Hehe.” Sikong Mingyue snickered, hints of sarcasm could be heard within that laughter.

Yet he didn’t know that currently, Qin Wentian was looking at him , in a somewhat bizarre way. Qin Wentian’s eyes seemed as if he was looking at a man who wished to court death.

Following which, under the gaze of Sikong Mingyue, Qin Wentian’s body slowly floated upwards, as he stood in the air.

“Yuanfu.” The hearts of the crowd trembled as they saw this. Qin Wentian had also broken through to the Yuanfu Realm.

“Hu, the speed of his cultivation, is far too fast to be believable.” Many people were sighing with relief in their hearts. Since Qin Wentian had already broken through to Yuanfu, he should have sufficient strength to contend against Sikong Mingyue.

“HAHAHA, that’s the way it should be.” Sikong Mingyue’s Astral Soul erupted forth. His 3rd Astral Soul had a faint, golden corona of light surrounding it. That Astral Soul was from the 4th Heavenly Layer, and was condensed from a beast-type Constellation that represented the demonic beast, Sword Eagle.

“Ranked #316 in the Warbeast Index, the Sword Eagle, known for its powerful attacks,” Qin Wentian murmured, upon seeing the beast-type Astral Soul.

The first and second Astral Souls of Sikong Mingyue respectively, were the Seven Slaughters Astral Soul and Sword Astral Soul condensed from Constellations in the 3rd Heavenly Layer while his third Astral Soul, Sword Eagle, was condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer. No wonder Sikong Mingyue was so confident in himself. All three of his Astral Souls emphasized augmentation of his attack power. In Chu, he could truly be described as monstrous.

“Hmph, you can be considered quite knowledgeable. I shall wash clean all the humiliation from back then with this battle today.” Sikong Mingyue drew in a deep breath, as the illusory manifestations of his Astral Souls, appeared to be much clearer when compared to when he was at the Arterial Circulation Realm. Naturally, the degree of augmentation the Astral Souls bestowed would be much higher as well.

A terrifying killing intent frenziedly gushed out from Sikong Mingyue.

The monstrous sharpness of his killing intent pierced towards Qin Wentian. Suddenly, Sikong Mingyue’s body was enveloped by a blood-red light, the pressure emitted so stifling, it seemed as though it was borne from the massacre of tens of millions of people, as a fearsome, baleful air engulfed the space between them. In the blink of an eye, Sikong Mingyue transformed into a stream of light, shooting forth towards Qin Wentian. His body was akin to swords, so sharp that it seemed he was totally capable of tearing apart the walls of reality, lacerating his way towards Qin Wentian. The pupils of the eyes of the crowd narrowed; would Qin Wentian be sliced into two by this attack?

A demonic glint of light flared in Qin Wentian's eyes as a gentle gust of wind started to flutter his hair. His palms glowed with a crimson light. Presently, Qin Wentian was already capable of utilising the power of his Bloodline Limit at any given moment.

Within his body, gushing sounds could be heard from the Yuanfu that connected to his Demon Sovereign Astral Soul. Terrifying amounts of Astral Energy circulated violently, channeled into his arm as Qin Wentian explosively blasted out with a palm imprint. Upon seeing the power of the palm imprint, many in the crowd were so shocked that their faces lost all color. Qin Wentian, was too tyrannical.

RUMBLE~ The pressure generated by Sikong Mingyue intensified as he tried to slash apart Qin Wentian's palm imprint. However, his momentum soon came to a halt. It was as though that palm imprint had inexhaustible amounts of energy within it, making it impossible for Sikong Mingyue to even advance an inch forward.

What palm was this, the might generated from it felt even more imposing than the gigantic mountains. At this moment, Sikong Mingyue's countenance turned ashen as he inclined his head, staring at Qin Wentian. Qin Wentian stared back indifferently; other than his eyes becoming more fiend-like, there didn't seem to be any changes to his appearance. From the disinterested and detached look in Qin Wentian's eyes, Sikong Mingyue comprehended that in Qin Wentian's heart, he had already sentenced him to death.

"I guess you truly wish to court death," Qin Wentian serenely spoke. Sikong Mingyue's body trembled unconsciously, as though

he had a sudden premonition of danger. Following which, he made a mad dash to retreat.

Qin Wentian raised his palms up once again, as an astonishing swirl of savage demonic Qi coated his hands. His palms took on an appearance akin to the palm of a demonic beast, as he blasted forth with the Kuji Imprint. This attack was unleashed by a combination of his powerful physique, alongside the tyrannical Astral Energy drawn from the Demon Sovereign Constellation of the 5th Heavenly Layer. How powerful would the might unleashed be?

Kuji meant emptiness and desolation, all life shall wither before it. Sikong Mingyue's defenses were effortlessly smashed through, the Kuji palm imprint slamming into his body, turning him into a desiccated husk of his former self. The crowd saw the body of Sikong Mingyue trembling helplessly in midair, before it flopped over, falling towards the ground.

Sikong Mingyue, one of the Duo Prides of Snowcloud, an absolute talent whose 3rd Astral Soul came from the 4th Heavenly Layer, wanted to wash clean the shame of his humiliation today?

Before he could even cross blows with Qin Wentian, he was already smashed to death by a single palm strike. No words were sufficient enough to describe how tyrannical the force of the Kuji Imprint was at the moment of impact!

AGM 196 - Diyi

Qin Wentian silently hovered there in the skies. There was no change in his expression as though the death of Sikong Mingyue was something insignificant.

The disparity between the two of them was too wide. Back when they were at the Arterial Circulation Realm, during the group battle of five versus five between both their academies, the Sikong Mingyue back then wasn't able to withstand a single blow. It was the same now as well.

Not only that, Qin Wentian didn't even bother to release his Astral Souls. Many people were silently speculating in their hearts, that if the Astral Souls Sikong Mingyue had condensed were from the 3rd Heavenly Layer, 3rd Heavenly Layer and 4th Heavenly Layer respectively, what about Qin Wentian? Previously, his first two Astral Souls were condensed from the 3rd Heavenly Layer and 4th Heavenly Layer. How about his third? (Author: Don't forget that it's still not revealed that QW condensed his first two Astral Souls from the 5th Heavenly Layer.)

Breaking through to Yuanfu meant that Qin Wentian had already embarked on the path of truly powerful experts. From this moment onwards, no longer would anyone dare to belittle this wayward youth, one that used to be met with contempt and disdain back then.

At this moment, in the air space above the Emperor Star Academy, stood the Headmaster of the academy, Diyi.

From his position, he could clearly view the situation over at Sake Street. He also saw how easily Qin Wentian defeated Sikong Mingyue. However at this moment, Diyi's heart was full of endless complications.

Turning, he glanced at the young maiden standing behind him. She was cloaked in a pure and clean feather coat, with a veil obscuring her features. The fine strands of her long hair gently danced about in the wind, as her exquisite figure alone was sufficient to drive people mad with lust. She stood casually, yet gave the impression that merely speaking to her would be an act of blasphemy.

Diyi discovered long ago the existence of this maiden. She should have secretly followed Qin Wentian upon his return. Upon seeing her, Diyi understood that these past 3,000 years of waiting, tasked with the mission of each successive generation of headmasters, that time had finally come to an end.

“In the future, I shall temporarily leave him in your care.” Diyi spoke to the young maiden.

Qing'er was still as expressionless as before; cool, aloof and indifferent as if her appearance and demeanor would remain so forever.

“Okay.” Lightly nodding her head, her reply was only a single word. She had always treated words like they were made of gold and therefore was a person who spoke little. Yet her simple replies gave people a feeling of reassurance.

As though once she had said it, she would definitely accomplish it.

“Foster father.” On the ground, Ren Qianxing called out with reddened eyes, looking at Diyi. “Does it really have to be like this?”

Diyi slowly shifted his gaze downwards, looking at Ren Qianxing with a gentle smile in his eyes. He suddenly recalled many things from the past, how his character was like when he was younger - wild, arrogant, unrestrained and frivolous. Back then, he listened to the instructions of his elders and unwillingly came to the Emperor Star Academy. It wasn't until he became the headmaster that he understood the importance of his mission.

The reserves of the Azure Faction had never once ‘openly’ appeared within the Azure Emperor Palace, with only a select few aware of their existence. There was only the mission handed down to them throughout each successive generation – Either they obtain the Azure Emperor's inheritance or, failing to do so, they had to become its guardian, waiting for the successor to appear.

And now, his long wait had finally borne fruit; his mission had finally ended.

“Qianxing, the Emperor Star Academy has always been one of the supreme entities in Chu. It has nurtured and produced countless talents throughout the ages, before finally arriving at this point today.” Diyi smiled as he gazed at Ren Qianxing. “This could already be considered one of the more perfect endings.”

“Is this really a perfect ending?” Ren Qianxing sighed. He was truly unwilling.

“Come, enough of that. Let us watch our students’ final battle.” Diyi smiled, turning his gaze towards the horizon.

Over there, the clashes were just as intense. Even Xiao Lan didn’t anticipate that the scale of this battle would escalate so quickly and to such an extent.

“Go and deal with the black robed man behind him,” Xiao Lan instructed the old man standing by his side. He nodded in agreement, as he moved towards the direction of Qin Wentian.

The black robed man’s eyes glinted as he realized their intentions. The two of them moved at the same time, opting for a different area. They knew that if they chose to engage in their current location, members from both their sides would suffer from the shockwaves of their battle.

Xiao Lan smiled. There was no one guarding Qin Wentian now.

His silhouette flickered, as he flew towards Qin Wentian’s direction. However, Xanxus soon appeared, blocking his path. The two of them collided, with the resulting impact forcing them backwards. Even though their cultivation bases were at the same level, Xanxus was quickly suppressed when fighting against Xiao Lan.

Qin Wentian remained standing there, staring at the fight between Mustang and Ye Wuque. Currently, Mustang was completely dominating Ye Wuque, who could only defend like a sitting duck, as Mustang unleashed his ferocious attacks.

Ye Wuque retreated step by step, his countenance incredibly unsightly to behold. Mustang wanted them to perish together, every strike of his was extremely ruthless, ignoring his self-inflicting injuries for a chance to kill Ye Wuque.

Suddenly, a cold glint of light flashed in Mustang's eyes, his killing intent overflowing. The sharpness of his palms were even finer compared to keen-edged swords, blasting towards Ye Wuque's heart.

However, Ye Wuque didn't dodge, allowing Mustang's palm strike to slam upon his body. BOOM! A thunderous sound rang out as the robes on Ye Wuque's body disintegrated into dust, the palm strike of Mustang landing around the area of his heart. However, the terrifying might behind the palm strike didn't quite reach Ye Wuque's body. He was actually equipped with a divine armor! This was a 3rd grade divine armor that was able to drastically reduce the force of impact for any incoming blow, something the Ye Clan had spent an astronomical amount to forge for him.

"DIE!" Ye Wuque roared in anger, as he slashed his sword towards Mustang's head.

However, Mustang was incredibly experienced. He reacted

instantly, causing a row of palm shadows to manifest. The shadows evoked a mini hurricane between them, shifting the angle of Ye Wuque's attack. The sword strike of Ye Wuque wounded Mustang only slightly, forcing him backwards. Ye Ran, who was also watching the battle, was long prepared for this moment. Seizing the opportunity, he immediately flew towards Mustang, as fireballs of a terrifyingly intense heat appeared around him.

Mustang's countenance turned grim, as he hurriedly sent out a palm in an attempt to defend. Despite this, the fireballs still blasted onto his body, causing him to groan in agony.

"Go in peace." Ye Wuque pierced forth with a sword finger, as a five-colored sword light flashed, intending to rupture Mustang's head.

However at the same time, an exceedingly tyrannical palm imprint shot forwards, the Kuji Imprint erupting forth with incredible power, devouring the five-colored sword light, before exploding towards Ye Wuque. Ye Wuque's countenance was a sight to behold as he hurriedly retreated, dodging the Kuji Imprint.

"Qin Wentian." An ice cold look of anger flickered in his eyes when Ye Wuque discovered who had interfered.

"You are truly tenacious indeed." From nearby, Xiao Lan had a shallow smile on his face as he regarded Qin Wentian. After which, Xiao Lan walked slowly towards him, as a strong sense of danger suddenly assailed Qin Wentian. Turning his gaze onto Xiao Lan, he felt a surge of lightning currents gushing into his brain, involuntarily snapping his eyes shut.

“CAREFUL!” Mustang hollered. Qin Wentian felt an impending sense of doom descend upon him, as he quickly gathered his energy. The blood seal within his body jumped about, as demonic Qi emanated forth from him. He then sent out countless palm strikes in the general direction of Xiao Lan, the pressure of each attacks felt as though there was nothing they would not be able to conquer.

Xiao Lan’s attack hit him full on, akin to thousands of millions of lightning currents, slamming upon his body. Qin Wentian groaned in misery, and as he felt the energy currents project an aura of destruction flowing within his body, heading towards his sea of consciousness. With a howl of rage, he utilised the power of his bloodline in defense as he escaped with full force, lengthening the distance between him and Xiao Lan.

When Qin Wentian finally opened his eyes, he could only see Xiao Lan serenely looking at him with insufferable arrogance, an expression of coldness on his face.

Xiao Lan was considered an absolute genius of the Nine Mystical Palace, and had a cultivation base at the 3rd level of Yuanfu. One could see how astonishing his combat prowess was from the ease he suppressed Xanxus, who was similarly at the 3rd level of Yuanfu. It was obvious he wasn’t an ordinary 3rd level Yuanfu Cultivator. Given how hurriedly Xiao Lan attacked, Qin Wentian, who wasn’t prepared, was naturally suppressed. However, despite all that, Qin Wentian only suffered from some minor injuries, a fact that caused Xiao Lan to have an expression of incredulity on his face.

“I thought you wouldn’t appear again after vanishing without a trace. To think that you actually returned voluntarily. Do you really think that I wouldn’t dare to kill you?” Xiao Lan coldly spoke, his arrogance stifling to the extreme. Suddenly, several figures gathered around Qin Wentian, as many experts similarly appeared around Xiao Lan.

“You want to kill him?”

At this moment, a voice drifted over, causing the crowd to incline their heads, only to see a few figures flying over in the direction of the academy. The man in the lead was none other than the headmaster of the Emperor Star Academy, Diyi.

Diyi turned his gaze downwards, locking eyes with Xiao Lan, as he faintly inquired, “ Since when did you have the ability to kill him?”

Xiao Lan frowned, looking at Diyi with a cold glint of light flashing in his eyes. Since when did someone from the Emperor Star Academy have the guts to speak to him like this?

“As long as I want to, I can kill him anytime. If I wanted to, how could he even oppose me based on his strength?” Xiao Lan’s gaze gradually sharpened, as he retorted arrogantly.

“You are saying that with your cultivation base at the 3rd level of Yuanfu, you want to have a one on one battle with him, whose cultivation base is only at the 1st level of Yuanfu? And that those

from the Emperor Star Academy are not to interfere?” Diyi coldly laughed.

“Regardless of how you wish to end this, if I want his head, do you think the Emperor Star Academy would be able to stop me?” Xiao Lan spat out. In Chu, he was the absolute authority. With his background, he definitely had the power to trample the Emperor Star Academy underneath his feet, let alone a mere Qin Wentian.

“Is that so?” Diyi’s countenance was still unperturbed. No one knew what he was thinking, not to mention that there weren’t many people who knew his real identity.

“Let me tell you now, if you take another step forward, the person Xiao Lan of the Nine Mystical Palace, shall cease to exist,” Diyi continued calmly. As the sound of his voice echoed out, the entire battlefield fell into silence.

Countless people glanced at Diyi, before returning their gaze towards Xiao Lan.

Diyi said that, should Xiao Lan take another step forwards, he would die.

Xiao Lan also stared at Diyi in shock. Despite knowing his status, Diyi actually dared to threaten him?

Him, the illustrious Xiao Lan, was actually being threatened over here, in such a small place like Chu?

Did he dare to take another step forwards?

What if Diyi was at the Heavenly Dipper Realm?

As the voice of Diyi faded away, the arrogance and prideful heart of Xiao Lan, began to waver.

After all, this place wasn't the Nine Mystical Palace.

If he died, so what if the Nine Mystical Palace annihilated the Emperor Star Academy afterwards? He would still be dead.

“Why are you so quiet now? Didn't you have something else to say?” Diyi serenely continued. At this moment, all the clashes and battles had stopped, everyone was focusing their attention closely on Diyi, this inscrutable existence that no one had ever met before.

Maybe back then, Luo Tianya had seen Diyi when he was attempting the test on the 7th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion.

Some distance behind Diyi, there was a veiled young maiden. The young maiden casually stood in the air, like a celestial immortal. The crowd stole glances at her, before looking at each other. Who was she?

AGM 197 - Xiao Lan's Death

Silence!

At this moment, the atmosphere was embedded in total silence. Diyi just stood there, looking down at Xiao Lan.

Xiao Lan stared back at Diyi, but he dared not take that step forward.

Signaling with his hands, an old man walked out from the crowd. However, he didn't approach Diyi, but rather, he moved towards Qin Wentian. At this moment, the killing intent gushing out from his body caused the hearts of those around him to tremble in fear.

The old man was definitely emitting an aura of at least the 7th level of Yuanfu or higher.

Qin Wentian simply gazed at the old man heading towards his direction, remaining motionless without a hint of worry on his face. Today, when Fan Le invited him for this, he never expected that it would escalate to become the decisive battle between academies for the ultimate victor. Naturally, behind the Royal Academy, there was still the representative from the Nine Mystical Palace – Xiao Lan.

Since Teacher Mustang had allowed him to participate, he definitely trusted in the Emperor Star Academy's preparation in providing protection for him.

Hence, he stood there nonchalantly.

The old man moved so fast that a whistling sound could be heard. As he neared, the full brunt of the pressure from his terrifying aura blasted out, locking onto Qin Wentian. Despite this explosive burst, he was also on his guard against Diyi, who was standing in the air.

Diyi still wore a serene expression on his face. With a slight wave of his hands, a gigantic palm strike descended from the Heavens with shocking speed, so fast that the eyes of the crowd couldn't even begin to track its movements.

The old man didn't even have the time to react, before he was slammed explosively towards the ground. With a clench of the gigantic palm's fingers, the old man was held in its grasp. Regardless of how hard he struggled, he was unable to free himself from being bound by the five fingers.

Terror flickered in the old man's eyes, and at that moment, he was no longer a powerhouse of the later Yuanfu levels, but rather, a pitiful old man trapped by the golden palm, free for anyone to slaughter.

In the air, Diyi's hands extended outwards, as the gigantic hand below mirrored his movements.

"You truly don't know what's good for you," Diyi faintly spoke, and abruptly, he clenched his hands into a fist, causing a blood

curdling scream to ring out, amidst the sounds of bones shattering. The body of the old man had been completely obliterated.

As the golden palm opened, only a droplet of blood remained within. The body of the old man had been smashed into smithereens, dissipating along with the wind.

A Yuanfu expert of the later levels was akin to an ant in front of Diyi, who didn't even need the slightest bit of effort to kill him.

The meaning of this was extremely clear to the spectating crowd; isn't this strength of the legendary Heavenly Dipper Realm? There was no way to resist his power, it was tyrannical to the point of striking fear into the hearts of everyone watching.

"How overwhelming." Qin Wentian's heart trembled as well. Was that gigantic golden-colored palm from before, a legendary Astral Nova?

Even in his dreams, Qin Wentian wouldn't have imagined that this dusty old guardian of the Heavenly Star Pavilion was actually so powerful to this extent. Not only that, back when Yue Hanshan was lording over the Emperor Star Academy, Diyi was tolerant enough and kept a low profile instead of revealing his true powers. But as for why Diyi had done such a thing, Qin Wentian himself didn't know. He would never have guessed that the reason was all due to him.

Xiao Lan also felt extreme shock shaking his heart. There was actually someone this powerful hidden in the Emperor Star

Academy of Chu.

Calming himself, he stared at Diyi. “Did you know he was from my Nine Mystical Palace? Are you not afraid of the repercussions for killing him?”

“If I hear one more word from you, you’ll die.” Diyi stared back at Xiao Lan. Xiao Lan’s countenance instantly stiffened, as his features contorted.

Earlier, Diyi had forbade him from taking a single step forward, and now, Diyi forbade him from even speaking.

If he disobeyed, only death awaited him.

Xiao Lan had never faced such humiliation before, but at this moment, he could only tolerate it.

“The arms of the Nine Mystical Palace have extended too far. Do you really think the Emperor Star Academy is a place for you to act big?” Diyi’s palms wavered, and an instant later, his terrifying Astral Nova transformed into golden streaks of lightning, speeding towards another aged figure of the Nine Mystical Palace. Diyi was purposely aiming for their stronger Yuanfu cultivators.

The countenance of the aged figure underwent a drastic change, he frenziedly dredged up the entirety of Astral Energy within his body, trying to defend against the lightning. However, when the Astral Nova neared, he couldn’t even resist in the slightest, and

was crushed to death by the pressure. His body disintegrated into nothingness from the impact, as he was killed without a trace.

However, Diyi didn't halt his actions, and the golden streak of lightning continued dancing in the air, zooming towards two more Yuanfu experts, wasting them from where they stood.

Silence permeated the air. No one dared to even move a muscle.

Especially those from the Royal Academy, they hadn't imagined such an ending would occur. As long as Diyi wished it, all of them would die.

The golden-colored palm hovered in the air, they didn't even dare to breathe too loudly.

The panic in Xiao Lan's heart surged to its limits, but he kept his mouth shut, not daring to utter a single word.

Bzzz~ The golden palm swooshed past, grabbing hold of Xiao Lan. At that instant, Xiao Lan's heart pounded madly, feeling as though it was about to burst. Recalling the scenes back when Diyi, without blinking, killed the powerful Yuanfu cultivators, he was truly terrified now that he was next.

Everyone's hearts were seized with nervousness.

The golden palm lifted Xiao Lan up into the air, and there were no fluctuations to Diyi's expression. He turned his gaze to Xiao

Lan, “In this place where there’s no support from the Nine Mystical Palace, no one would even realise it if you died. For all your pride and bluster, wasn’t it all false arrogance? If you truly had the ability, did you even need to show off in such a small place like Chu? Today, I can temporarily spare you from death. However in future, if you dare to infuriate me again, I will make you this promise. The moment you step out of the Nine Mystical Palace, I will hunt you down and kill you.”

As the sound of Diyi’s voice faded, the golden palm abruptly flung out, catapulting Xiao Lan through the air.

“Get out of Chu.” A voice sounded out within Xiao Lan’s mind, and his body was forced by the impact of the throw to flip countless somersaults through the air before he could stabilise himself. His countenance was incredibly ugly to behold, this shame was pushing him to the brink of rage. However, again, he had no choice but to tolerate it for now.

“Emperor Star Academy.” Xiao Lan’s eyes glimmered with hatred and impotent fury. However, he didn’t dare turn his head back, and could only gulp down his resentment and continue flying away.

Diyi’s gaze turned upon the other cultivators from the Royal Academy. At this moment, all of them were trembling with trepidation, their hearts filled with incomparable terror. As long as Diyi wished for it, they would all die here.

“All of you scram,” Diyi calmly spoke, causing those from the Royal Academy to blink in wonder. Wasting no time, their

silhouettes flickered, vanishing like smoke in merely an instant.

“We still showed mercy in the end.” Mustang’s fists were both tightly clenched as he sighed. Inclining his head, he stared at Diyi, “Sir, why didn’t you allow us to slaughter them?”

From the tone of his voice, one could clearly hear the rage and hatred bottled up within him.

“I didn’t want anything to happen to any of you,” Diyi replied. Mustang froze, before he drew in a huge breath and bowed, “Mustang was wrong.”

“It’s alright. For those that aren’t aware of this, there is still an extremely powerful old freak in the Royal Clan. Let’s return to the academy,” Diyi replied. Maybe the others might not know how deep the waters of Chu were. He had lived for many years, and had spent the majority of his life within the Royal Capital. Although he was relatively unknown, no one else was clearer than Diyi regarding all the happenings in the Royal Capital. Diyi was naturally knowledgeable of the number of true powerhouses belonging to the Royal Clan, but were currently hiding in the shadows.

He knew of the old freak residing in the Royal Clan, who had been secluded behind closed doors for many years. If he had chosen to slaughter all those from the Royal Academy earlier, nothing might happen to him because of his power, but what about those from the Emperor Star Academy? Was he strong enough to protect them all?

The cultivators from the Emperor Star Academy retreated. The weaker ones gathered together, looking at this legendary character from their academy. This was their headmaster, easily slaughtering countless experts with a mere wave of his hands. How imposing was that?

Diyi glanced at the crowd below, as a gentle smile appeared on his face. After guarding the academy for so many years, it could be said that his feelings and devotion to the academy was second to none. However today, he had no choice but to make this decision.

“The Emperor Star Academy, has a history of over 3,000 years. Through these years, we experienced countless rain and snow, but regardless, we always stood at the peak of Chu, enjoying eras of glory. I’m proud to say that I’m a part of the academy,” Diyi calmly spoke, there was only silence in the air as everyone attentively listened.

“However, no matter how it pains me, I have no choice but to make this major decision. From today onwards, the Emperor Star Academy shall be dissolved.”

“What?”

“WHY?” As the sound of Diyi’s voice faded, the countenances of everyone underwent a drastic change.

Perplexity, bewilderment, everyone had expressions of confusion on their faces. Dissolve? But why??

Diyi waved his hands, and the din created by the students died down. Diyi then continued, “I understand all your feelings. However, we no longer have a choice; the Emperor Star Academy can no longer exist in Chu. This decision of mine... I spent years of contemplation before I decided. Despite so, don’t be disappointed, all of you currently standing here is already an indication that your talent is above average. The world out there is truly vast, there are numerous powers that are even stronger than the Emperor Star Academy, and there will be an even bigger piece of sky for you to soar through.”

Qin Wentian calmly listened, but no one knew what he was thinking. Mustang, Luo Huan and Fan Le stood beside him.

“Teacher, did you already know of the headmaster’s decision before this?” Qin Wentian asked in a low voice, sighing.

“Headmaster Diyi made this decision to protect the innocent students, for if we continued with this war of attrition, they would end up the only unlucky victims. Although the headmaster had killed those Yuanfu experts from the Nine Mystical Palace, he had no choice but to do so as a means of intimidation. By choosing these actions, he had already decided that this would be the end.”

Mustang sighed again. Even without Xiao Lan, Diyi had still slaughtered the Yuanfu experts from the Nine Mystical Palace. They had too many methods at their disposal in dealing with students from the Emperor Star Academy.

And as to why Xiao Lan was spared, it was because Diyi knew that should he die, even if the Emperor Star Academy was dissolved, the Xiao Faction in the Nine Mystical Palace would go all out to hunt down the former members of the academy.

If Xiao Lan didn't die, then with the earlier threats made, the Nine Mystical Palace wouldn't dare to go too overboard.

Diyi had done what he did, only after contemplating the situation from various angles. Because of the secret of the Azure Emperor, Diyi knew that many transcendent powers already had their eyes on the academy. Under such a situation, dissolution of the Emperor Star Academy was something that couldn't be helped and overall was the best choice to make.

Naturally, Diyi's actions today, were also because of Qin Wentian. He had finally completed his mission in the Emperor Star Academy.

"All of you will definitely have better futures. Children, take care." Diyi smiled as he turned, and walked in the direction at the back of the Emperor Star Academy, towards the mountains. He left behind the students, many of whom still had despondent looks and lost expressions on their faces.

Qin Wentian gazed at the departing back of Diyi. He drew in a deep breath, as a sharp glint of light flashed in his eyes, "I'm really unwilling for the academy to disappear like this."

.....

On the outskirts of the Royal Capital of Chu, Xiao Lan was mounted on a demonic beast as he prepared to leave. He no longer had any face left to stay behind in this land of humiliation.

A strong sense of reluctance erupted in his heart, as his fists clenched in anger. Beside him, there were still a few experts acting as bodyguards, but none of them dared to speak for fear of further angering Xiao Lan.

“Who?” At that moment, one of the bodyguards froze. However, as the sound of his voice faded, a terrifying silhouette flashed by. As a slicing sound resonated out, the bodyguard’s head rolled to the ground.

In an instant, the remaining body guards’ Astral Souls appeared, unleashing their auras, however, the silhouette was too quick. In the mere blink of an eye, all of the other bodyguards were annihilated.

Xiao Lan trembled, looking at the figure in front of him. With an ashen countenance, he asked, “Wh..what do you want to do?”

“To kill you,” that figure replied, causing despair to flash in Xiao Lan’s eyes. He instantly turned, trying to retreat, yet it was all futile in the face of this unknown assailant.

Indeed, a palm sliced out with unfathomable might, separating Xiao Lan’s head from his body, stark terror still apparent in his eyes.

Only a single thought ran through Xiao Lan's mind as he died. If he perished here, then no one would know that he was the one who killed him. It was too late for regrets.

AGM 198 - Life-And-Death Contract

News of the dissolution of the Emperor Star Academy quickly spread out to the entire Royal Capital, and caused an immense wave of commotion.

Today, the academy that stood at the peak of Chu for 3,000 years, had actually been dissolved. This caused many to lament silently in their hearts.

Everyone actually understood that the Emperor Star Academy had no choice but to do what they did. Facing the relentless suppression from the Royal Clan, together with the backing from the Nine Mystical Palace, including Headmaster Diyi's tyrannical stance of killing their experts, in the end there was no way the Nine Mystical Palace would let this go. Thus, the best solution left was to dissolve the Emperor Star Academy.

At this moment within the academy, a heavy sense of grief could be felt in the air. Countless students bid their farewells to each other as they departed.

Qin Wentian stood atop a faraway pavilion as he gazed at the students of the academy, and an indescribable feeling erupted in his heart.

“Why are you sad?” Luo Huan walked to the side of Qin Wentian, her beautiful eyes also staring at the departing students. A bitter smile tugged the corners of her lips, as a sense of helplessness could be felt emanating from her.

“Sister Luo Huan, what are your plans now?” Qin Wentian turned, gazing at that beautiful countenance, as he squeezed out a smile.

“Sigh, I plan to visit the Azure Continent. The Nine Mystical Palace is said to be situated there and I want to see how exactly powerful it really is,” Luo Huan replied, “How about you? Where do you plan to go? Do you want to go together with me?”

“No, I still have some things yet to complete,” Qin Wentian replied in a low voice. Luo Huan contemplated Qin Wentian, only to see his clear eyes looking back at her. She couldn’t tell what her junior brother was thinking. This fellow had really matured.

Luo Huan walked forward, extending her arms to embrace Qin Wentian into a hug. Her actions caused Qin Wentian to be stunned. Luo Huan’s beautiful eyes were only an inch away from his, and as her busty chest pressed against his, Qin Wentian blushed, feeling a burning sensation upon his face.

“Seems like you are still a little boy after all, come on don’t be shy.” Luo Huan laughed, as her sexy and lustrous lips kissed Qin Wentian on his forehead.

“Sister, don’t you know how great your charm is?” Qin Wentian bitterly smiled.

Luo Huan giggled as she broke the embrace. “Junior Brother, thank you for everything. You must hurry and grow up to be

someone dependable.”

“I definitely will.” Qin Wentian nodded heavily in agreement. Losing such an important place, he never wanted to repeat the experience ever again.

“Enough, Luo Huan, stop flirting with your Junior Brother. Wentian, Elder Ren is looking for you.” Mustang approached them from the back as he smiled.

“Teacher, I’m trying to build up a better relationship with Junior Brother Qin, I don’t wish for him to forget all about me in the future.” Luo Huan laughed.

“You and your dastardly ideas.” Mustang glared at Luo Huan, but he was feeling exceptionally happy in his heart. After the death of Mountain, the students that became closest to him were none other than Luo Huan, Qin Wentian, Yu Fei and Fan Le. He naturally hoped that they would have a good future.

However, there was still a knot in his heart. Ye Wuque, Wu Chong, Wang Teng weren’t dead yet.

The death of Mountain had yet to be avenged.

.....

Qin Wentian followed Ren Qianxing and arrived at a temporary residence in the mountains. Over there, he met Diyi.

Diyi smiled, gesturing for Qin Wentian to take a seat.

Qin Wentian nodded, as he sat down beside him. Diyi cast a glance at Ren Qianxing, who understood his silent request, and thus departed the area. Over here at this mountain peak, so tall that it could overlook the entire Emperor Star Academy, only Qin Wentian and Diyi remained.

“I’ve asked the teachers and elders to copy the cultivation arts and innate techniques from the Heavenly Star Pavilion and pass it on to our departing students. In addition, I’ve chosen and prepared the original version of these innate techniques for you to cultivate. As for cultivation arts, I didn’t select any. In any case you should know best which are the ones most suitable for you, so go ahead and choose them for yourself. ” Diyi took out a few innate technique manuals and passed them over to Qin Wentian.

“Thank you, Headmaster.” Qin Wentian didn’t fake being courteous, as he accepted the manuals. Indeed, he didn’t have the time to go to the 6th level of the Heavenly Star Pavilion to select top-tier Earth-Grade innate techniques.

“How many Yuanfus do you currently have?” Diyi glanced at Qin Wentian inquiringly, as an expression of admiration flickered on his face.

Qin Wentian’s countenance froze, as the words sank in. So, Diyi already knew.

“Three Yuanfus,” Qin Wentian replied. Momentarily, Diyi drew in a long breath, as he patted Qin Wentian heavily on his shoulders. “Good, good, the Azure Emperor finally has a successor.”

“Headmaster, have you always acted as the guardian for the academy?” Qin Wentian curiously asked.

“Yes.” Diyi nodded, as he replied, “You should already know of the Azure Emperor Palace. That year, after the death of the Azure Emperor, the palace was infiltrated by external powers. They wanted to obtain the inheritance of the Azure Emperor. The Azure Faction had no choice, so as a last resort, several babies were sent away, raising them apart from the chaos and the influence of the disintegrating Azure Emperor Palace. Now a few thousand years have passed, and those external powers that infiltrated the Azure Emperor Palace have already become the main faction while the Azure Faction, those of Dicang’s bloodline, were firmly suppressed.”

“But luckily, the decision to send away the babies proved to be great foresight. After they grew up, they became the 'hidden' Azure Faction, and no one knew of their existence. However, news of the 'hidden' faction was gradually exposed over the years. This was all due to Luo Tianya, who incited the conflict between the Emperor Star Academy and the Nine Mystical Palace.”

“Headmaster, are you saying that the ones that lent the Emperor Star Academy a helping hand was someone from the 'hidden' Azure Faction?” Qin Wentian asked in surprise.

“Yes, back then I was still guarding the Heavenly Star Pavilion. I didn’t wish to expose myself before the Azure Emperor’s final secret of the Azure Emperor was obtained by a successor. However, this matter was partly discovered by the ‘outsider’ Faction of the Azure Emperor Palace. Luckily, they only knew bits and pieces of it.” Diyi laughed as he continued, “In reality, the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction would always send some of their members to cultivate within the Emperor Star Academy. I’m a very good example, and there are also others, but no one knew of our true background. However, none of us succeeded in the tests the Azure Emperor set and eventually, the inheritance fell into your hands.”

An expression of astonishment flashed through Qin Wentian’s face. Only now did he understand more clearly the crux of the story.

Diyi then retrieved a token, with the word ‘Azure’ engraved onto it. He passed the token over to Qin Wentian as he stated, “I’m the keeper for this token, but I don’t have the authority to use it. From this moment onwards, as the successor, this shall belong to you.”

Diyi spoke, passing the token over, and as their hands came into contact, his fingers lightly sliced past, and a drop of blood fell from Qin Wentian’s finger onto the token. Instantly, it shone with a radiant glow, and to Qin Wentian’s surprise, a map appeared in the space above the token.

“From this moment onwards, this belongs to you. The map shows the location of where the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction is located. I hope that in future, when your power is enough, you will lead

them back to the Azure Emperor Palace to reclaim their rightful place, able to live without fear of the threat posed by those transcendent powers of the nine continents,” Diyi solemnly spoke, causing great waves to billow in Qin Wentian’s heart.

“How strong are they?” Qin Wentian asked.

Diyi smiled, “I’m not clear of their actual strength but at the very least, they should be more powerful when compared to the Xiao Faction of the Nine Mystical Palace. However, you have to remember that members of the ‘hidden’ Azure Palace place great emphasis on keeping a low profile. Back then, many transcendent powers banded together to kill the Azure Emperor, and they would definitely not allow the Azure Emperor Palace to rise up in power once again.”

“Mhm.” Qin Wentian earnestly took note.

“And one more thing, you are not a descendant of the direct bloodline, so it will not be so easy for you to completely control the power of the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction,” Diyi explained, and comprehension dawned on Qin Wentian’s face. Oh yeah, with his current power, how would those Heavenly Dipper Sovereigns of the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction even acknowledge his commands? It truly wouldn't be easy.

“However you don’t need to worry. Even if you can’t control them, at the very least, they wouldn’t act against you. They would wait for you to grow, until you obtained their recognition.”

“I will definitely work hard.” Qin Wentian calmed the waves in his heart as he gave a carefree laugh. Upon learning such a huge secret, there shouldn’t be anyone that would be able to remain calm, right?

Although the ‘hidden’ Azure Faction would be under his control, it went without saying that as of now, the burden and responsibility of reviving the Azure Emperor Palace back to its former glory now fell onto his shoulders.

“I also heard that you and that lass of the Mo Clan are mutually fond of each other. She has extraordinary talent in the field of herbs and alchemy. It’s just that it’s hard for her talent to blossom when stuck in such a small place as Chu. Before I depart, do you want me to act as your matchmaker?” Diyi laughed, causing an expression of embarrassment to appear on Qin Wentian’s face.

“It’s still too early for that.” Qin Wentian gulped, as nervousness flickered in his eyes.

“Haha, you’re right. In that case, I shan’t interfere in the matters of you youngsters any longer.” Diyi laughed, as he shifted his glance to the ephemeral silhouette poised not far away from him. She stood there silently, as though she didn’t exist. Due to her presence, Diyi refrained from reminding Qin Wentian to be wary of dangers and to take care of himself. He knew that Fairy Qingmei had already made preparations to ensure the safety of Qin Wentian.

Naturally, Qin Wentian had already noticed the ephemeral beauty standing near him. He felt it was somewhat strange,

however, she didn't say anything to him, and just stood there silently.

.....

Regarding the news of Emperor Star Academy's dissolution, the Royal Clan of Chu was secretly delighted. Although they were intimidated by Diyi's actions, nevertheless from this moment onwards, the Emperor Star Academy would no longer exist. This meant that the power that had been opposing the Royal Clan for over 3,000 years was no more. Naturally, they would feel relaxed.

For these past months, because of Qin Wentian, the Emperor Star Academy remained in direct opposition against the Royal Clan.

Now that the students of the Emperor Star Academy dispersed, some even leaving Chu, the Royal Clan didn't interfere. They were more than willing to see such a situation.

However today, outside the residence of one of the powers supporting the Royal Clan, the Ye Clan, a Life-and-Death Contract was deposited, challenging Ye Wuque. The location was none other the towering platforms of the Chu Emperor District, where the Jun Lin Banquet was hosted. The sender of the letter, was naturally Qin Wentian.

This piece of news was quickly publicized, as it soon engulfed the entire Royal Capital. Diyi's appearance drew so much attention that many had already forgotten the champion of the Jun Lin Banquet, Qin Wentian, had already stepped into Yuanfu. And what's more, he had tyrannically disposed of the second-ranked

Sikong Minyue with such ease, it bordered on the absurd.

The most dazzling genius in the Jun Lin Banquet, ignoring the difference in their cultivation levels, had issued a challenge of his own accord to Ye Wuque, who had only just stepped into the 2nd level of Yuanfu himself. Undoubtedly, this piece of news was capable of stirring up the hearts of the people.

How strong was Qin Wentian now that he had broken through to Yuanfu?

A Life-and-Death Contract, these four words allowed everyone to know how strong Qin Wentian's self confidence was.

Not only that, more news followed. Similarly, both Wang Teng and Wu Chong also received Life-and-Death Contracts issued by Qin Wentian.

Ye Wuque, Wu Chong, Wang Teng, were all at the 2nd level of Yuanfu. Back when they accompanied Xiao Lan to challenge the Emperor Star Academy, all three had obtained victory over the geniuses of the Emperor Star Academy who had the same level of cultivation base as them.

The Chu Emperor District, after the Jun Lin Banquet, once again started to attract the attention of the entire Royal Capital.

Qin Wentian, would he still be able to replicate his feats from back then? Shining with as much splendor as before, ignoring the

differences between cultivation bases and wasting away those so called 'geniuses'?

AGM 199 - Killing Wang Teng

Chu Emperor District was opened to the masses today. The entire spectator's stand was filled with people from all around the Royal Capital; how could they miss a life and death battle between Qin Wentian and the three powerhouses at the second level of Yuanfu?

If Ye Wuque rejected the challenge, the halo from his 'genius' title, would fade away from him.

In any case, he was Ye Wuque, the most talented cultivator in the Ye Clan's younger generation, with a second level Yuanfu cultivation base. Naturally, he would not reject the battle.

Qin Wentian had long arrived way before the appointed time, sitting atop a dueling platform, with his eyes closed. His countenance did not twitch, it was as though he didn't realize he was the target of stares from the entire crowd in the spectator's stand.

Mustang, Luo Huan and Fan Le had also arrived. How could they miss such a battle?

Even Chu Tianjiao was present. He sat atop the Azure Dragon Jadeite Seat, an expression of anticipation could be seen on his face. He really wanted to see how Qin Wentian could be so confident in winning against Ye Wuque, Wu Chong and Wang Teng.

Bai Qingsong and Autumn Snow were here, as well. Deep in her

heart, Autumn Snow felt an indescribable emotion as she gazed upon Qin Wentian. If it weren't for the fact that she was personally witnessing all this, she would never have imagined the day would come where Qin Wentian would duel against Ye Wuque.

Would he be able to win?

For reasons unknown, at this moment in Autumn Snow's heart, she was actually willing to believe there was a possibility for Qin Wentian to defeat Ye Wuque.

"Hmph, look at how much effort the Emperor Star Academy had to expend to protect him. Since he dared to issue the Life-and-Death Contract, he would be the laughing stock of the country if he died here," remarked Qiu Mo with sarcasm. From below the platform, he glared at Qin Wentian, his countenance cold.

Back then, he had never liked Qin Wentian and had been involved in several conflicts with him. Thus, seeing Qin Wentian gradually becoming stronger, he naturally felt displeasure in his heart.

Luo Huan laughed lightly as she stared at Qiu Mo. "Oh yeah, do you still remember what a loser you were back then? You were at Yuanfu, while Junior Brother Qin was only at Arterial Circulation. You only knew how to use sarcastic words and the pressure of a higher cultivation base to bully him. I'm afraid that now, if he merely smacked you once with his palms, you would definitely die."

Qiu Mo's countenance froze. His cultivation base was still at the first level of Yuanfu, same as the Sikong Mingyue who was defeated by a single palm strike. He could only snort coldly in response, while bearing with the jealousy in his heart.

At this moment, a few figures abruptly appeared in the air. These figures were none other than Ye Wuque, Wu Chong and Wang Teng.

Ye Wuque was clad in white, and was as handsome as ever. Wu Chong's own demeanor was incredibly demonic, while Wang Teng gave off an aura of extreme arrogance.

The three of them stood in the air, disdainfully looking down at Qin Wentian with cold gazes. They were exceptional geniuses who had a cultivation base at the second level of Yuanfu, but their face and pride were all tarnished, now that they had been challenged by a mere 1st level Yuanfu cultivator.

"If you died in today's life and death battle, are you sure no one would come and make trouble for us?" Wang Teng stared at Qin Wentian, as he coldly remarked.

Naturally, Wang Teng was referring to Diyi. If Diyi chose to take revenge for Qin Wentian's death, no one in Chu could stop him.

"If Qin Wentian dies in battle today, I can promise you that no one from my side will seek revenge for him. However, if anyone from your side dares to interfere in this battle, be prepared to bear the consequences yourselves." Beneath the platform, Ren

Qianxing's cold gaze shot towards the three figures standing in the air. Since Qin Wentian dared to issue the Life-and-Death Contract, he had absolute confidence in him.

“Fine. There's three of us here, how do you want to die?” Wang Teng asked harshly, his voice as cold as ice.

Qin Wentian was too arrogant, all of them had a cultivation base at the second level of Yuanfu, their reputations were not just for show.

Qin Wentian spread his hands as he stood up. His eyes were incredibly calm, with no hint of disturbance in them. His indifferent attitude clearly indicated that he didn't even put them in his sights. Such an attitude caused Wang Teng to narrow his eyes in anger. His aura flared up with a sword-like sharpness, as he dashed downwards to Qin Wentian.

Within Qin Wentian's body, the Astral Energy in his Yuanfu circulated as the blood seals of his bloodline fluttered with agitation. Qin Wentian's aura was undergoing a transformation.

His long black hair danced about in the wind, while his eyes turned demonic. Even his physique somehow seemed to become stronger and taller, as a red sheen of bloody light could be seen gleaming in his eyes.

“All of you, come at me together.”

Qin Wentian's voice was still serene, however, and as the sound of his voice drifted into the ears of the crowd, it felt like a thunderbolt strike from out of the blue, shocking them so much that their eyes couldn't help but widen.

Did they hear it wrongly?

Ye Wuque, Wang Teng and Wu Chong; they were all top-tier experts in the second level of Yuanfu. But now, Qin Wentian actually told all three of them to come at him together?

Those in the crowd that initially had confidence in Qin Wentian, now felt that he was too egotistical. He was simply arrogant, to an unreasonable degree.

“He truly doesn't know how high the Heavens are.” Qiu Mo laughed, with contempt in his eyes. Was Qin Wentian looking for death?

Mustang gazed upon Qin Wentian's figure. He didn't know why, but he felt extremely touched.

Ye Wuque, Wu Chong and Wang Teng were the culprits behind Mountain's death. Qin Wentian didn't choose to fight them one-on-one, because he knew that if he killed just one of the three, the other two might no longer want to battle. Only in a scenario of one versus three, would his opponents have no chance to give a rejection.

As for Qin Wentian's decision to fight three of them at the same time, naturally, Mustang also had absolute confidence in Qin Wentian's abilities.

Since Qin Wentian had said it, he would definitely be able to accomplish it.

This was the impression Qin Wentian had always given to him. Back then it was so, when they were in the Sky Harmony City. Back then, it was also the same during the Jun Lin Banquet.

Today, it would be the same as well.

Luo Huan and Fan Le also had the utmost faith in Qin Wentian. Unknowingly, that youth had already caused his friends to believe in him to such an extent, a confidence that had no logic, yet this was an emotion that came from the depths of their hearts.

Ye Wuque, Wang Teng and Wu Chong were all stunned. Even Ye Wuque, who was always calm and collected, couldn't help but to laugh out loud. Qin Wentian was so clueless, he wouldn't even know how he'd die later on.

"The price of your foolishness, is death," Ye Wuque remarked. After which, he glanced at the two others beside him, as he continued, "Since he wishes to court death this much, let's grant it to him."

In unison, the nine Astral Souls of the three cultivators erupted

into being. Brilliant star light illuminated the area, as rampant Astral Energy waves bedazzled the audience's vision.

“DIE!” Ye Wuque roared, as brutal killing intent pressed downwards. The three of them turned, rushing towards Qin Wentian with incredible speed. In the blink of an eye, they formed a chaotic maelstrom of carnage gusting towards Qin Wentian.

Ye Wuque's attack resembled a sword, flashing multi-colored beams of sword light, penetrating through everything.

Wu Chong's attack resembled a demon, incomparably ferocious, able to suppress all his opponents.

Wang Teng's attack resembled a war chariot, bulldozing over everything that blocked his path.

Their attacks congregated together, forming into the maelstrom, with Qin Wentian as the target. The hearts of the crowd pounded wildly, it was as though they could already see Qin Wentian getting lacerated into pieces. The maelstrom howled in madness.

Boom! Qin Wentian took a step forwards, as a towering aura erupted forth from him. In that instant, boundless amounts of demonic Qi and a blood-colored glow coalesced, shrouding him in a layer of light. His inky black long hair was so straight that they resembled swords.

Qin Wentian inclined his head, as his eyes flickered with a

fearsome bloody demonic light. Just a single stare from him was capable of causing the three above to feel a stifling sense of pressure, but in spite of this, they did not lessen the power of their attacks. They wanted Qin Wentian to die here.

ROAR~ A terrifying howl of rage exploded from Qin Wentian, as though he wanted to obliterate both Heaven and Earth. Blasting out with both his palms, the crowd felt the aura Qin Wentian was exuding resembled an Ancient Demon. His attacks gave off the feeling that there was nothing they couldn't conquer.

As the last stance of the Thousand-Hands Imprint - Great Thousand-Hands Imprint, erupted forth, the space between Qin Wentian and the three attackers were filled with countless gigantic palm shadows, colliding directly with the incoming maelstrom.

The terrifying sounds of an immense explosion rang out, actually reducing the might of the fearsome maelstrom, to the extent it became a ferocious after-wind, blowing upon the faces of the crowd. After the explosion, Qin Wentian was already flying in the skies, dragging the three attackers with him as he continued heading upwards.

“KILL!” Qin Wentian roared, as he spat out endless beams of sword rays, while blasting forwards with both his palms. His attacks were filled with an indomitable might.

The scene of Qin Wentian dragging the bodies of his attackers upwards, caused the hearts of the crowd to tremble with disbelief. Was this even possible? They felt as though they were under an illusion, it was as if Qin Wentian was the one with the higher

cultivation base. He gave off the feeling that his body contained an unlimited amount of energy.

“You are dead, Wang Teng.” Qin Wentian’s voice drifted to the crowd as he executed the Dragon Capturing Hands from the top-tier, Human-Graded innate technique – Dragon Subduing Fist. With his current cultivation base, the Dragon Capturing Hands when executed, was akin to him really subduing a demonic dragon. His hands transformed into blood-red dragon claws as he made a grab towards Wang Teng.

The countenances of the three attackers turned incomparably unsightly to behold. Howling madly, they spun in the air and twisted away as the Astral Energy within their Yuanfu exploded forth, granting them sudden bursts of strength. After they lengthened the distance between them and Qin Wentian, powerful innate techniques of different varieties were blasted out, targeting the latter.

Qin Wentian responded by pushing out his left palm. A fearsome red-colored mountain peak manifested, as it explosively slammed towards Ye Wuque and Wu Chong. Qin Wentian had already perfected his Falling Mountain Palms, especially when he had converted the Astral Energy absorbed from the Heavenly Hammer Constellation to Mountain-type Divine Energy within his body. This further augmented the power of this innate technique.

Ye Wuque and Wu Chong both madly sent out their attacks, splitting apart the mountain peak. However at the same time, Qin Wentian’s right draconic claw had already reached Wang Teng.

“SCRAM!” Wang Teng howled, as his Astral Souls descended. The attack he unleashed with both hands were akin to the power of ten thousand horses galloping across the plains. However, the Dragon Capturing Hands Qin Wentian executed was infused with Sword-type Divine Energy, containing an exceptional sharpness, easily breaking Wang Teng’s attack apart. Fear flashed in his eyes, as Wang Teng quickly retreated. However, the draconic claws of Qin Wentian seemed as though they were truly attached to the arms of a demon. With great speed, Qin Wentian’s arms actually lengthened, his claws clutching around Wang Teng’s head.

“NOOOOOOOO!” Wang Teng’s features contorted with terror. When he stared at Qin Wentian, he felt as though he was looking at an invincible demon king.

“Goodbye.” A crisp sound rang out, as the draconic claws crushed Wang Teng’s head. The savage, bloody scene caused the spectators to freeze, as countless people in the crowd were seemingly lost, yet to come back to their senses.

Was that really an attack unleashed by a cultivator at the first level of Yuanfu?

At this moment, the hearts of those second level Yuanfu cultivators in the crowd were also shuddering. If they placed themselves in Wang Teng’s shoes, they would also be unable to block that attack, enabling Qin Wentian to kill them.

When they looked upon Qin Wentian again, there were no longer any traces of the youth from before. He was too powerful.

That youth had matured, and already had the capability to look down on all those supposed ‘geniuses’ of Chu, advancing towards an Era that solely belonged to him!

AGM 200 - Matters Of The Past Dissipate With The Wind

Ye Wuque and Wu Chong felt dread in their hearts as they saw the death of Wang Teng.

The three of them had only just started encircling Qin Wentian, but who would have expected that within the blink of an eye, Wang Teng would already be dead.

When Ye Wuque and Wu Chong gazed at Qin Wentian again, trepidation could be seen in their eyes, as their facial expressions grew incredibly ugly to behold.

Not only that, many of the spectating Ye Clan members stood up, gazing towards the skies as shock bombed their hearts.

When had Qin Wentian become this strong... if that were the case, wouldn't Ye Wuque...

Qin Wentian then swept his gaze towards the two attackers. Ye Wuque and Wu Chong locked eyes for an instant before similar expressions of ruthlessness could be seen on their faces.

AWOOO~ An overflowing sense of demonic Qi permeated the air, as all three of Wu Chong's Beast-type Astral Souls howled. His whole appearance resembled a demonic being rushing down from the skies, aiming to kill Qin Wentian. Over ten thousand manifestations of illusory demonic beasts materialized, as they

rushed together with Wu Chong, viciously targeting Qin Wentian.

The entirety of Qin Wentian's arms were as though they were covered by demonic armor. The violent look in his eyes grew increasingly pronounced. Now that he had already cultivated the second stage of Fiend Transformation Art, in addition to the power of his bloodline limit, he truly resembled an ancient demon monarch, imperiously gazing at Wu Chong.

The Dragon Subduing Fist he unleashed, metamorphosed into numerous illusory demonic dragons howling in anger. Their towering violence could be felt, even by those in the spectator's stand, as the illusory dragons explosively clashed against the horde of ten thousand demonic beasts.

At the same moment, a pair of wings appeared on Ye Wuque's back, as he descended in a graceful arc. With beautiful multi-colored swords equipped in both hands, his swords sliced towards Qin Wentian's throat.

Qin Wentian didn't even bother to look at Ye Wuque. He merely raised his left hand, flicking a finger in the direction of Ye Wuque as monstrous sword Qi erupted forth from him. The countless numbers of sharp swords formed from the sword Qi, congealed into a powerful beam of light as it shot towards Ye Wuque.

Ye Wuque's countenance sunk, as he instantly changed tactics. At the same time, Qin Wentian's right palm had already wavered several times, reinforcing the illusory dragons as the tyrannical force of his earlier strike blasted apart Wu Chong's attack. The remnant of his attacks continued forth unimpeded, the waves of

aftershock causing Wu Chong's head to explode.

The expression on Ye Wuque's face was exceptionally unnatural when Qin Wentian directed his gaze towards him again. His wings fanned out, granting Ye Wuque an increase in speed as he explosively retreated. From that earlier exchange of blows, he already knew that he wouldn't be able to defeat Qin Wentian. And in the face of certain death, he had totally discarded his face and pride. Staying alive was the most important thing to him.

A pair of Garuda Wings sprouted behind Qin Wentian's back, his body sliced through the air with incredible speed, akin to a real Garuda, easily catching up to Ye Wuque. Upon nearing his target, Qin Wentian executed the Dragon Capturing Hands, grabbing onto Ye Wuque. Regardless of how much he struggled, Ye Wuque realised that he could no longer advance forward.

The direction that Ye Wuque was moving forward to, was naturally in the direction of the Ye Clan. At that moment, aside from sensing a strong will from Ye Wuque, those from the Ye Clan could also see true terror reflected in his eyes.

“No...” The countenances of the Ye Clan's members turned incomparably unsightly. They had no way to accept such an ending.

Rendering Ye Wuque immobile with a few well-placed strikes to his spinal area, Qin Wentian stood in the air with Ye Wuque's body in his hands, staring down at the Ye Clan's members with his expression as serene as ever.

“Is this the so-called number one ‘genius’ from your Ye Clan? Even before I started cultivation, the halo of his supposed ‘brilliance’ had already shone so brightly in the Sky Harmony City, pressuring my Qin Clan, as well as myself.” Qin Wentian glanced at the Ye Clan, as well as Bai Qingsong.

“From then to now, around a year or more has passed right?” Qin Wentian murmured to himself, yet his calm waves sent great ripples through the hearts of the crowd.

Yes, in just this short span of time, Qin Wentian had already defeated Ye Wuque.

Despite seeing the pitiful begging expression on Ye Wuque’s face, Bai Qingsong still didn’t dare believe all of this was real.

“Release him.”

At that moment, a voice rang out. The speaker was none other than the person atop the dragon seat, Chu Tianjiao.

His countenance was still as unperturbed as before, and nobody knew what he was thinking of. However, as he spoke his earlier words, asking Qin Wentian to release Ye Wuque, his voice was filled with an unquestionable command.

A ray of hope bloomed in Ye Wuque’s heart, as the eyes of the Ye Clan’s members brightened. As the person with the most authority

in Chu, maybe Chu Tianjiao would be able to save Ye Wuque.

Qin Wentian didn't turn his head, and continued staring ahead. The sounds of bones shattering echoed in the stillness of the air. In that instant, the light that was shining forth from the eyes of the Ye Clan's members, turned dim.

Qin Wentian slowly relaxed his grasp, as Ye Wuque body fell lifelessly downwards, slamming onto the ground. His reply took the form of action, breaking apart the last of their hopes.

An unnatural light flashed in Chu Tianjiao's eyes. Although he had expected the possibility of Qin Wentian not complying, he didn't think that Qin Wentian would be so decisive, killing Ye Wuque immediately after he interceded for him.

It was as though Chu Tianjiao himself was the culprit that hastened Ye Wuque's death.

Without a doubt, in front of the spectating crowd, Qin Wentian's actions were akin to a huge slap to Chu Tianjiao's face.

"Release him?" A sarcastic smile appeared on Qin Wentian's face. "Mountain was merely a student of the Emperor Star Academy, who did he offend? Had his murderers ever thought of showing mercy to him? When facing the oppression from the Royal Academy and Nine

Mystical Palace, did you ever think of sparing the students of my Emperor Star Academy? Back when the Ye Clan surrounded the Sky Harmony City, causing many in my Qin Clan to die, did they

ever think of granting us a path to live?”

Each and every word spoken by Qin Wentian was filled with coldness. He couldn't even be bothered to look at Chu Tianjiao.

The Chu Emperor District was totally silent, it was as though the entire crowd could feel the flames of fury burning in Qin Wentian's heart. If not, he probably wouldn't have gone all out, crushing the three attackers so overwhelmingly.

“Chu Tianjiao, if you had the opportunity to kill me, I don't think you would show me any mercy as well, right?” Qin Wentian asked indifferently.

Chu Tianjiao didn't reply, but the truth was as what Qin Wentian had said. If he really had the opportunity to kill Qin Wentian, there was no way he would show him mercy.

“Me too,” Qin Wentian quietly spoke, causing the crowd's gaze to freeze. The simple words of ‘me too’, had already announced Qin Wentian's determination.

Qin Wentian then turned to regard Bai Qingsong. At that moment, Bai Qingsong was truly afraid.

Back when the Ye Clan came to the Sky Harmony City with a marriage proposal for Autumn Snow and Ye Wuque, Bai Qingsong was incomparably excited. In the proposal, he saw the rise of his Bai Clan, as well as hope, which caused him to kick Qin Wentian

away without hesitation, betraying the Qin Clan.

But now, Ye Wuque had actually died in the hands of the youth he kicked away. He felt as though he were dreaming, this sensation was extremely surreal. Nobody would be able to comprehend the current emotions running through Bai Qingsong.

Did he regret it? He didn't know. But so what if he had regrets? At this moment, he felt as though he had aged tremendously. He was somewhat jealous of Qin Chuan, why did he have such an excellent adopted son? It was the opposite in the case of his own daughters; Autumn Snow was a 'genius' that had degenerated, while Bai Qing, his younger daughter whom he used to look down on, had actually condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer for her first Astral Soul. Yet, because he had repaid kindness with enmity, Bai Qing broke their father and daughter relationship, discarded their familial ties and disappeared completely. Up till now, no news had been heard about her.

As for him, after enduring all these 'impacts', and seeing the rise of Qin Wentian with his own eyes, it all caused him to have an extremely bitter feeling in his heart.

"Qin Wentian." At this moment, Autumn Snow spoke. The smile on her face when she faced him was as though she had already discarded the huge rock that had always been in her heart.

"I know that our Bai Clan has let you down. I, too, have also let you down. Sometimes in the middle of the night, I would regret the choices I made back then. It was you that allowed me to become the dazzling genius of Sky Harmony City, but what you

received in return... was my betrayal. Not only that, after the academy selection, my Bai Clan joined the Ye Clan in encircling and killing members of your Qin Clan. I know that I don't have the qualifications to beg for your forgiveness, but I still have to say this."

The Autumn Snow of this moment had already discarded the burdens filling her heart, as she calmly continued, "The things that happened, were all wrought by my own hands. Regardless of how you want to deal with me, even if you want to kill me, I would have no complaints and will wholeheartedly accept your decision. However, please spare my father, he's already so old... I'm no longer the dazzling 'genius' I once was and even my little sister, Bai Qing, has abandoned the family because of you. My father is truly old."

"Do you know that Bai Qing was even more amazing compared to me. Her first Astral Soul was condensed from the 4th Heavenly Layer. That day, she cried as she spoke to my father, releasing her Astral Soul, while telling him she was leaving because of her Wentian gege. Because of you, she severed all ties with us, abandoning her clan, and up till now there has been no news of her. You should know how much she cared for you. I know that I have no qualifications to beg you, but please... please, for the sake of my little sister Bai Qing, please spare my father. If she knew that her beloved Wentian gege killed her own father, how would she face you in the future?"

The crowd also felt moved in their hearts as they heard the sincerity of Autumn Snow's beseechment. So, the rumors were true, her talent was bestowed upon her by Qin Wentian. Back then, the Bai Clan did indeed betray him.

But to think that the little daughter of the Bai Clan had actually condensed an Astral Soul from the 4th Heavenly Layer for her first Astral Soul, wasn't this a little too terrifying?

Qin Wentian's heart shuddered lightly, as the silhouette of a little girl appeared in his mind. He still remembered back then, how the little girl handed a dagger to him, asking him to use her as a hostage for him to escape the clutches of her father. Back then, he could still remember how devastated her heart was.

"Wentian gege." The sound of the lass Bai Qing's voice resounded in his head. Qin Wentian drew in a deep breath, as he tried to clear his mind. Today, he had truly intended to kill Bai Qingsong. However, upon hearing the words of Autumn Snow, his normally resolute heart, actually wavered.

How could he still face Bai Qing if he were to truly kill her father?

Qin Wentian directed his gaze onto Autumn Snow again. Autumn Snow still had a smile on her face, yet tears were silently flowing down it. She too, was reminiscing on the beautiful memories of the three of them together. Now, everything they once shared had dissipated together with the wind, leaving only painful memories.

"Bai Qingsong, cripple your own cultivation and this matter shall be at its end," Qin Wentian finally spoke, deciding not to kill him.

Bai Qingsong's expression faltered, before he nodded his head lightly. Raising his palm, he gritted his teeth and ruthlessly

slammed his palms onto his chest, causing his arterial pathways to shatter. In the next instant, Bai Qingsong appeared to have aged over ten years older, as strands of white appeared among his hair.

“Father,” Autumn Snow cried out, as she shifted her gaze towards Qin Wentian.

However, she only saw Qin Wentian turn around as he left the platform, doing nothing to her.

The strength in Autumn Snow’s legs gave up as she stumbled. She sat on the ground, with tears streaking down her face. This painful emotion in her heart felt extremely excruciating. Watching Qin Wentian walk further and further away, she couldn’t help but question herself, what had she lost..?

She was finally free and should be overjoyed, and yet why did she feel such intense pain instead?

Qin Wentian left, this piece of his past that was stuck in his heart, had faded away like smoke. Only that bright-eyed and innocent little lass, Bai Qing, remained in the warmth of his memories.